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**Behind the Tax-Exempt Schools Debate** — *Jeremy Rabkin*

***Development and Assistance***

**I. The Social Roots of Hunger and Overpopulation** — *William Petersen*

**II. Foreign Aid: What is at Stake?** — *Peter Bauer & Basil Yamey*

**Christo in Central Park—and in Harlem** — *Nathan Glazer*

**Religion in Middletown** — *Theodore Caplow*

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# THE Public Interest

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# Mediating institutions: the communitarian individual in America

MICHAEL NOVAK

A new public policy is emerging, one which may turn out to be as fruitful for Democrats as for Republicans. Indeed, there are reasons for believing that both major parties in America are in the grip of necessities larger than their prior intellectual conceptions. The competition seems to concern which party will better succeed in grasping the new necessities and successfully mastering them. Neither can wholly return to the outdated and unworkable habits of the past.

Succinctly stated, the emergent public policy begins by facing squarely the existence of recalcitrant social problems, and by recognizing that tried-and-true Republican conceptions of "trusting the individual" are as insufficient as the hoary Democratic conceptions of "leaving it to the state." The public policy thinking of Republicans is becoming less individualistic, more social; and the public policy thinking of Democrats is becoming less statist, more willing to look to other social agencies.

The meeting place of these two trends, which questions of cost and humaneness make virtually inevitable, lies in the concept of mediating structures. Since this new concept depends on two assumptions about the actual character of the American social system, we must reflect on the personality type actually promoted by

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the American system and on the character of that system itself. Ethics begins in politics, Aristotle teaches us; the *ethos* is shaped by the *polis*.

Self-knowledge, for polities as well as persons, is always an intention, not a finished achievement. Self-discovery entails the rejection of earlier self-images. Two common misunderstandings about the United States, often shared by Americans themselves, represent images to be rejected. The first is that we are a nation of individualists, weak and fractured in our communities. The second is that ours is, on the one hand, a "free enterprise" economy or, on the other hand, a pale imitation of "mixed" social democratic economies like those of Great Britain and West Germany.

The emergent public philosophy is based on quite different assumptions. Two of these may be succinctly stated: (1) The secret to the psychology of Americans is that they are neither individualists nor collectivists; their strong suit is *association*, and they freely organize themselves, cooperate, and work together in superb teamwork. (2) The social system of the United States is constituted of three independent, yet interdependent, systems of institutions, organized along different axes and even different values: a political system, an economic system, and a moral-cultural system.

This second assumption needs some explanation. The intellectual tendency inherited from Europe of dividing analysis into pairs—liberal vs. conservative, right vs. left—has encouraged us to misapprehend our own threefold structure. Dualistic thinking leads us to imagine that one must prefer either the state or the individual, either the political system or the economic system. In actual practice, all three parts of our social system play important roles in strengthening and restraining each other. In particular, the political system has as one of its central tasks to "promote the general welfare." Its role in promoting commerce and industry, and in empowering associations of citizens, is critical. The role of the economic system in fulfilling the material aspirations of all citizens, and in freeing them for aesthetic, religious, and moral pursuits, is indispensable to the legitimation of the political system. The American system is neither statist nor laissez-faire. It is a system of *political economy* rooted in a powerful and historically original *idea*; *novus ordo seclorum*, as the founders put it. From the beginning, the state has undertaken tasks essential to the promotion of commerce and industry, but in a special American spirit. For the most part, the state has not tried to *control* or *manage* economic activities. Rather, it has actively provided all of the indispensable infrastructures and

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preconditions which the economic system can scarcely provide for itself.

This, then, gives rise to the central question in American political economy: How, in practice, ought the American political system address itself to the notable American capacities for free association and the building up of mediating institutions? Individualism alone is no sufficient, and it is not in the American grain. Free enterprise alone is not sufficient, and neither is an omni-activist state.

## Associative community

Frequently, in discussions of community, scholars accept as the primary model for community a form of life, either that of family kinship or that of the agricultural village, characteristic of pre-modern societies. This enables them to speak of "the breakdown of community," for it is clearly true that in a post-modern society earlier forms of community are fractured and opened up. It does not so clearly follow, however, that the earlier ideal of community represents the highest form of community, or that all forms of community ought to be measured by it. Much depends upon selecting as one's ideal the most relevant and telling concept of community.

When I contrast, for example, the village community of my great-grandparents in the Tatra Mountains of Central Europe with the forms of community known to their great-grandchildren in the United States, I am not fully persuaded that that earlier form of community was in all ways superior to the later. Similarly, when I reflect on the strong family life that earlier generations are said to have experienced, I am not fully convinced that it was in all respects superior to the sort of family life known to our generation. If not everything new has been gain, neither has everything been loss.

Not to wander too far afield, I would like to sketch at least some components of an ideal type of community, drawn more from modern than from pre-modern experience. It is true that primordial ties of blood (I suppose today we ought to say genetics), familial dependence, shared faith, shared tradition, and shared cognitive horizon retain a more powerful force in human affairs than a merely individualistic, atomic theory of human life properly expresses. Still, forms of community based upon blood, family, kinship, shared faith, shared traditions, and shared cognitive horizon exhibit quite remarkable human weaknesses. If it is too much to regard such communities as universally unenlightened, narrow, bigoted, unsophisticated, and unfree, it is not too much to observe their real limitations.

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Consider the family. Even in the relationship between husband and wife, the role of election and free choice, although in some societies not prominent, has long been codified in Christian and Jewish marriage liturgies. Free will is of the essence; coercion renders the marriage contract invalid. Thus, in this primordial form of community, the role of contract or covenant has long been recognized. Children do not, of course, choose their parents. Still, it is regarded as a good that children should come to love their parents not only out of dependency but also, as it were, as chosen friends—responding to freely given love with freely given love in return.

Without appealing to an image of human relations which implies that each human person is solitary, atomic, and entirely rational and voluntaristic in his or her self-approbated behavior—without, that is, appealing to various schools of rationalism, voluntarism, and radical individualism—one may still hold that in communal relations an elective contract or covenant represents the highest form of human dignity. Proximity, instinct, affection, similarity of background, and many other "non-rational," "non-voluntaristic" factors may be involved in human communities. There may never be (or only rarely) a "purely" rational or voluntary choice. Still, a measure of freely chosen compact plays a significant role in the ideal of human community. One of the founding images of the American sense of community lies, accordingly, in such documents as "the Mayflower Compact." A long and hallowed literary and liturgical tradition employs the image of God's covenant with His freely chosen people and their acceptance thereof as the original model for this idea. The Jewish and Christian God first loves humans, and then is loved freely in response. The ideal of community between God and humans, based upon free election on both sides, came in this way to inform the classic American ideal of human community.

Compared to the traditional societies of "the old world," it is no doubt true that the communities of "the new world" experienced conditions of uprooting, mobility, and voluntariness of a unique sort, unique at least in their frequency and massive social character. Immigrants had to "break" from their communities of origin, at least in part (certainly in the geographical ties of imagination and sensibility, in their love for their native mountains, plains, towns), in order to rebuild new communities in a new land. But they *did*, in almost all cases, build communities, not only on the frontier but in city neighborhoods. True enough, the initially distinct American experience of emphasizing the right of each individual to pursue personal happiness led to a new exhilaration on the part of individuals,

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who in large numbers were taught to depart from the bosom of their families to "make their way in the world." Perhaps because ancient communal ties were so strong, great symbolic energies had to be unleashed to encourage young persons to "break" from their homes and to "strike out on their own." Thus, the cowboy, even the gangster, the outsider, the loner, the "Marlboro man," became powerful and distinctively American symbols. Simone de Beauvoir recounts in her memoirs how she, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others in their circle first came upon the images of the existentialist hero in American movies of the 1930's.

## The "new world" communitarian

This symbol of the lonely individual was embodied often enough in reality to be credible, for it was involved in the decision of succeeding generations of American children to try new ways and to seek out new places, apart from the horizons of their families. Still, this symbol tells only a small part of the American experience. Characteristically, the outsider or adventurer or inventor built a new community, a new family, a new set of associations, a new corporation, even a new industry. And many Americans remained "at home" in their communities of birth. Apart from myth, the American individualist is remarkably communitarian; our favorite sports—baseball, football, basketball—are liturgies of teamwork and association.

Few cultures in the world, I think, promote in their young as many habits of cooperation, sympathy, teamwork, organization, and other social virtues as the American. Tocqueville already noticed this trait in 1836, a trait, perhaps, required by the necessities of settling a new continent. Nearly all tasks were too large for one man or family alone; cooperation was indispensable to survival. The associative ethos of Judaism and Christianity reinforced its importance. Is there an American village or city without its annual "Brotherhood" awards? In fraternity and association, Americans were not violating an ethos but fulfilling it, and not only for physical but also for psychical survival. American philosophers like Josiah Royce and John Dewey are preeminent among philosophers of the world in their astute and detailed reflections on the centrality of community to human life.

The American ideal of community, however, has never been collectivist or state-centered or all-encompassing. If, on the one side, Americans are not individualists, neither do they admire be-

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longing to one institution alone. There is no one overarching religion to which all subscribe. Although the English language and the heritage of British political institutions have given the nation the backbone of its common culture, there is no strictly enforced ethnic or particular cultural horizon, and the common culture itself is shaped by the continuing contributions of many cultures. The continental size of the United States makes for disparate regional interests, experiences, and perceptions. As Madison and Hamilton prescribed in *The Federalist*, the promotion of commerce and industry further divided the nation into diverse and competing values and interests. The number of associations to which many citizens belong is quite staggering. Organizations as diverse as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Lions Club, Parent-Teacher Associations, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, athletic leagues, and all the multitude of voluntary associations embraced under the United Way and all the committees, organizations and activities promoted by a multitude of churches, keep many Americans almost as busy attending meetings after school or work as they are during the average work week.

Between individualism and collectivism, there is in America a third way. Between the individualist and the collectivist there is the communitarian individual—the individual whose life is given substance by the many communities and associations in which he or she participates. The American way of overcoming individualism is not through an all-consuming attachment to the state or any other collective, but through the building up of many diverse associations and communities. Undoubtedly, there are individuals who are left out, truly lonely and perhaps forgotten ones, as there are, indeed, true individualists who choose to remain outside as many associations as they can. Yet, as there is a full literature on the lonely American, there is another on the American as a joiner, organization man, conformist. (The adversarial intention in much American literature and journalism—intending to blame Americans for every opposite failing—can hardly escape attention.) The empirical truth, then, is rather complex, but the ideal of community is clear. The spectrum of reality in America is broad, but a great many Americans live quite rich communal, associative lives, both in their families and at work, among friends they choose and among others with whom fate has conjoined them. Even strangers are remarkably friendly to one another, as travellers from many lands have often observed. Americans commonly chide one another to be yet more open, ecumenical, understanding, cooperative, helpful—even to "smile." It is not an American ideal to be self-enclosed, indifferent to others, hostile, or

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cold. Even such volumes as *Looking Out for Number One* and *Assertiveness Training* have as their premiss that learning such things is against the ordinary grain.

## Political economy under democratic capitalism

These two general concepts, concerning the associative character of American life and the special ideal of a coordinate political and economic system, set the stage for new practical experiments in political economy. Given their social skills, Americans are in a position, in addressing social needs, to go beyond individualism and beyond statism. Given the mutual respect of the economic system and the political system, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, Americans are in a position to maintain an activist government without establishing government as the chief agency for managing and administering vast social programs. This large conceptual framework is important, but not sufficient.

The general principle, however, is plain. A swollen government must be taught to divest itself of as many activities involving its own managerial administration as possible. Simultaneously it must catalyze other social agencies and offer them the necessary support to perform the necessary tasks better and more efficiently. Some examples give hope. As often as possible, users should pay the costs—the airlines for air traffic controllers, for example, as is done in Switzerland and elsewhere. For some public services, like sanitation, contracts to private companies have proven to be less costly than a governmental agency. In other areas, however, like welfare, the complexities and perplexities are intimidating. One hardly knows, at first, which techniques to recommend.

The principle is to empower individuals through local agencies to achieve their own independence. Yet, in many cases, government must do the empowering. Without government, many important social energies cannot be released. Thus, the American ideal of political economy depends upon the wisdom and undergirding strength of an activist government, which must remove impediments, lend assistance, and through positive actions release the manifold energies of the private sector. A do-nothing political system would fail "to promote the general welfare." A do-everything political system smothers it. Finding the techniques that actually empower citizens is at the heart of wise political economy.

Historically, the American political system has attempted to empower families to own property and has provided assistance

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which private services could scarcely provide. Consider the Homestead Act, the land-grant colleges, rural electrification, the federal abolition of slavery, civil rights acts against discrimination based upon race, the provision of social security and unemployment insurance, and many other indispensable governmental activities. Our political and economic systems are not identical, but go together in mutual modification, and are both further modified by our common moral-cultural institutions, habits, and values.

Thus, the distinctively American conception of political economy is not that of a free economic system alone, nor that of an omnicompetent state. In the American model—more fully realized in practice than in abstract theory—the political system is distinguished from the economic system, but is interdependent with it in many ways. Utility companies represent a form of semi-private, semi-public business. Some corporations—port authorities, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Post Office, and many others—have a uniquely public character while remaining somewhat insulated from direct day-to-day control by the political system. Furthermore, without governmental regulation, competition would lack the common rules without which a fair game cannot be played. To list all the ways in which the political system modifies, supports, and regulates private industries of extremely diverse sorts would take us too far afield. But it is important to notice that, in practice, the relations between the American political system, in its many diverse parts, and the American economic system, in its own baffling diversity, are extremely complex.

Even in the pages of *The Federalist,* Madison and Hamilton properly understood that one of the chief tasks of political leadership is to create conditions for a flourishing and diverse economy. Correspondingly, one of the chief tasks of business leadership is to nourish the sorts of prosperity, economic progress, fairness, and sense of community which are essential to a democratic polity. Neither politics alone nor economics alone is sufficient. Democratic capitalism is neither socialist nor laissez-faire in its conception; it is a form of *political economy,* a set of coordinate, not subordinating, systems. At one extreme, the state does not attempt to absorb into itself and utterly to subordinate to itself the entire economy. At the other extreme, no business or industry is without political responsibilities expressed by sanction of law, by custom, and by self-restraint.

It is difficult to draw exact lines in any purely theoretical way marking off the precise limits of the political system, on the one hand, or of the economic system, on the other. Yet industry by in-

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dustry, case by case, adjudication of rights and responsibilities is constant. Errors at either extreme are relatively easy to spot, even if partisans at the extremes may strenuously argue their positions. What cannot be denied is that, equally, the political system and the economic system each has its integrity and assigned turf even as particular cases and the general proportions of the playing field are passionately debated.

It is common to express this consensus by describing the American system as a "mixed" system, neither purely capitalist nor purely socialist. Yet there are reasons for thinking that this common expression is seriously misleading. It is absurd to think that government, which after all has responsibility for currency, can be wholly insulated from indispensable activities in the economic sphere. That is why thinkers such as Adam Smith, Madison, and Hamilton thought in terms of *political* economy. In actual practice, moreover, especially in an economy of continental size, crossing sovereign state lines, neither the political system nor the economic system can avoid intersecting with the other at many points, not least in the lives of all citizens who participate in both. The ideal of the American system is not properly described, then, as a "mix" of capitalism and socialism. It is more accurately described as a "mix" of a vital political system and a vital economic system. Each system depends, in part, on the vitality of the other. (The experience of other nations in which one or the other is comparatively weak and is virtually swallowed by its stronger partner illustrates the need for mutual vitality.)

For this reason, and parallel to the expression "political economy," I prefer to describe the American system as "democratic capitalism." The ideal of democratic capitalism is not that of a purely independent free enterprise system or laissez-faire, nor is it the ideal of democratic socialism. Democratic capitalism is not a halfway house between socialism and laissez-faire. It is, in its own right, a quite distinctive ideal. There is a tendency in democratic socialist thought to grant the state, or at least the political system, ultimate and final power over the economic system. There is a tendency in libertarian or laissez-faire thought to subordinate the state to the economic system, and the social texture of actual life to the solitary individual. By contrast, the ideal of democratic capitalism is that of two coordinate systems, in some respects independent of each other and in some respects interdependent, but neither subordinate to the other.

There is one set of problems, however, which since about 1955 has tipped the American system closer to the socialist ideal. These

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are the problems of "the safety net," gathered under the rubric of "the welfare state." Typically, faced with a social problem, one set of critics has turned to the individual, while another set has turned to a state agency. From social security programs to aid for families with dependent children, from assistance for the handicapped to unemployment compensation, the argument almost always has been settled by increments of state activism. For social problems are, by their nature, beyond the capacity of solitary individuals. Does it follow, however, that they are best addressed directly and in a managerial way by the state? This conclusion would follow if the only form of social agency were the state, but this condition is not met.

## The role of mediating institutions

Undeniably, a large society faces problems that may overwhelm solitary individuals. Undeniably, the solutions to social problems must also be social. It does not follow that the state is the only, or the most effective, or the cheapest, or the most sensitive social agency. Besides the state, there are many other social agencies, some already existing, and some perhaps yet to be imagined.

The dimensions of the sudden growth in the social welfare sector of the federal budget are spectacular. In 1955, federal entitlement payments to individuals stood at approximately $20 billion or 21 percent of the federal budget. By 1970, these sums had grown to approximately $70 billion or 31.8 percent. By 1980, they had grown again to $270 billion or 46 percent. Since these entitlements have become automatic, projections for 1984 come to just over $400 billion or 52.7 percent of the budget, and no end to uncontrolled escalation is in sight.[1]

Many entitlement payments do not, of course, go only to the poor. All retired senior citizens are entitled, for example, to the social security payments they have been conscientiously foregoing during their working years. Still, when $300 billion has been spent to eliminate poverty during 1981 alone, citizens may well ask why eliminating poverty costs so much. Are cheaper, more effective methods not available?

Suppose, for example, that one accepts an admittedly extreme estimate of 25 million Americans who would, without transfer payments, be living below the official poverty line for a non-farm family

[1] Robert Fear, "War on Poverty is Difficult to Call off," *The New York Times*, November 29, 1981.

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of four ($8,450 per year). How much ought it to cost to see to it that all poor persons received cash sufficient to bring them above this line? For the sake of simplicity, let us divide the number of poor individuals into household units of four each. That makes 6.25 million poor households. To transfer cash payments of $8,450 to each such household directly would cost about $50 billion (much less if we include income the poor already receive). Poverty—in this strictly mathematical sense—should be eliminated at a fraction of what is currently being expended. It is by no means clear, then, that current federal strategies for eliminating poverty—an admirable aim—follow the most direct, effective, and cost-efficient path.

There is, indeed, a certain contradiction in much recent thinking about the elimination of poverty. On the one hand, poverty is most easily and commonly described in monetary terms: so many dollars for a non-farm family of four. On the other hand, government entitlement payments are chiefly designed to meet specific *crises* in which individuals may be involved. Thus there are programs for medical assistance, food stamps, families with dependent children, rent supplements, and many other specific cash and non-cash transfer payments. Each of these programs has its own criteria, paperwork, administrative apparatus, and self-policing functions. Two problems arise here. First, measuring the non-cash benefits, especially medical care, is extremely difficult. As the *Times* piece already cited explained, "Medical benefits do not improve the economic well-being of a household as much as cash would." Secondly, the overhead involved in all the many administrative agencies may be, cumulatively, far more costly than direct cash payments to the poor. Given the cash themselves, the poor might better select—and with far less dependency—their own priorities.

The social problems of poverty are clear enough. So also are the responsibilities of society to meet these problems. Two arguments have so far been addressed, however, against choosing the federal government as the agency through which to meet those needs. One is the constant escalation of costs. The other, related but not identical to it, is skepticism about the efficiency of government as the superior practical agency of the good society. The factor of cost imposes the reality principle. Something must be done to control costs. It is the second factor, however, which gives rise to the search for other agencies besides those of government to meet the necessary tasks.

Most everyone agrees that a good society ought to provide a "safety net" for its less fortunate citizens. Programs for direct cash transfers

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to the poor—a guaranteed annual income—have more than once been proposed in the Congress. This direct approach has so far failed of adoption. A third idea has, therefore, come under consideration. If direct cash transfers through some form of guaranteed annual income are not adopted, and if the strategy of multiple governmental agencies to meet multiple specific crises gives rise to uncontrollable costs, are there not other social agencies which might properly meet undeniable social needs? There are, in any society, many other social agencies besides the state. Because these social agencies mediate between the individual and the state, and mitigate the vulnerability of individuals left to themselves, such agencies have come to be known as "mediating" or "mitigating" institutions. Among them are the churches, schools, unions, fraternals, neighborhood organizations, and other voluntary associations of every sort.

Is it possible that social needs can be met more efficiently, more cheaply, and with greater effect through social agencies in the private sector? Furthermore, might not costs to government be reduced if the government used its own funds to strengthen these non-governmental organizations, rather than to attempt to meet all social problems itself?

## Experimental programs

In the pragmatic context of American life, such programs are liable to begin piecemeal, as small experiments. No grand architecture is yet in place, even though the basic conception seems to be gaining adherents. Let us simply list, then, some examples of how this new approach might work.

(1) Consider a family with a retarded child. If the child is hospitalized in a governmentally funded hospital (and in some cases this may be necessary), the costs may run to $30,000 or more per child per year. If, on the other hand, the family would be willing to care for the child at home, then either a cash transfer or a tax credit of, say, $2,000 per year might so empower it. Invested over ten years, such funds might pay for special facilities in the home such as a whirlpool or other therapeutic devices. The savings to the government would seem to be great. In at least some instances, individual churches or other groups have sponsored programs for the retarded and the handicapped in their localities. At a fraction of the cost of total institutionalization, such programs have been able to provide a daily environment, sometimes including income-producing work suitable to those involved, of remarkable human quality. Such

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churches or other local agencies might well require some federal subsidy to meet their costs. Even if such a subsidy reached as high as $4,000 per year per handicapped person it would be far less than the cost of total institutionalization.

(2) A bill (S. 1581) is before the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee to allow taxpayers the choice of a tax credit or a deduction for each household which includes a dependent person who is at least 65 years old. This bill encourages families to maintain their care for grandparents and other elderly relatives. It also gives the elderly the satisfaction of contributing a significant share to family income through the tax credit or deduction. Not all the elderly would be covered by such a provision, but a significant number would be. To the profound human value of a multi-generational household would also be added an empowering incentive. (Not to be neglected is a source of some child care for some fortunate families.)

(3) Another bill (S. 1582) would exempt from taxation certain trusts established for the benefit of elderly parents or handicapped relatives, and would provide a deduction for contributions to such trusts. While not universally applicable, this possibility might relieve pressures on social security for at least some millions of retired persons.

(4) Another bill (S. 1579) would allow corporations, large or small, to deduct all contributions made to a joint employee-employer day care facility. A variation of this provision was enacted in the Economic Recovery Act of 1981.

(5) The Economic Recovery Act of 1981 also permits working spouses to invest the first $2,000 of earnings in a tax-exempt Individual Retirement Account. Accumulating over a working lifetime at compound interest, such a fund would provide a substantial sum (easily $100,000 or more) available at retirement. This provision has two important social effects. Since over half of all married couples now have two incomes, a great many households may be stimulated to add substantial sums, tax-free, to the national pool of investment capital. Savings will thus be encouraged. Furthermore, sole reliance upon social security payments will be reduced. Both spouses will be accumulating substantial retirement accounts.

(6) In every community, rural and urban, there are private associations or networks involved in feeding the elderly, in developing supervised activities for teenagers, and the like. In times of stress, it has been found, individuals in trouble turn first and most often to these personal, local networks for assistance. Last of all do they

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turn to governmental agencies. Furthermore, they report higher rates of satisfaction when they turn to persons already known to them among their neighbors, in their churches, in groups with which they are affiliated, and the like.[2] A measure of governmental subsidy to such local networks and associations, already in place and functioning with affective ties of many sorts, would seem to offer an effective use of such funds. Costs would seem to be far less than for governmental duplication of local capacities.

(7) Two decades ago, teenage unemployment among whites was higher than such unemployment among blacks. Currently, the problem of teenage unemployment among blacks is considerably greater. The figure is often announced in percentages: "Forty Percent [or Fifty Percent] Black Youth Unemployment." In hard numbers, however, the scale of the problem is more readily apparent. Fluctuating monthly, the figures from the Department of Labor tally just under 400,000 black youth unemployed.[3] Considered simplistically, at the minimum wage of approximately $6,000 per year, the total financial cost of employing all 400,000 of these young persons comes to $2.4 billion annually. It does not seem beyond the reach of Americans to invent ways for making at least part of the required wage costs available through local institutions, which might put such youngsters to productive work. Some might be able to produce more goods and services than is represented by their wages. Even if some did not, the investment would seem to be of large future productive benefit.

Missing has been the link between work to be done and the un-

[2] See the work on mediating structures, by Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1977). See also: Robert L. Woodson, A *Summons to Life: Mediating Structures and the Prevention of Youth Crime* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute; and Cambridge, Mass.: Baltimore Pub. Co., 1981); Brigitte Berger and Sidney Callahan, *Child Care and Mediating Structures* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1981); Lowell S. Levin and Ellen L. Idler, *The Hidden Health Care System: Mediating Structures and Medicine* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Pub. Co., 1981); John Egan, et. al., *Housing and Public Policy: A Role for Mediating Structures* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Pub. Co., 1981); David Seeley, *Mediating Structures and Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Pub. Co., 1981); Robert L. Woodson, ed., *Youth Crime and Urban Policy: A View from the Inner City* (Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute, 1981); Robert L. Woodson, ed., *The Urban Crisis: Can Grass-Roots Groups Succeed Where Government Has Failed?* (Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute, 1981).

[3] On minority employment see Walter Williams, "Government Sanctioned Restraints that Reduce Economic Opportunities for Minorities," *Policy Review*, no. 2 (Fall 1977), pp. 7-30; and Peter Germanis, "The Minimum Wage: Restricting Jobs for Youth," *Backgrounder* No. 147, July 1, 1981 (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation).

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employed who wish to do it. The fastest growing sector in the American economy has been the service sector and the many small businesses that are mushrooming in the service sector. Many such businesses are uniquely suited to young employees. Over 80 percent of all new jobs in the U.S. are supplied by small businesses.[4] I do not have in mind the precise mechanism that would expedite the hiring of larger numbers of currently unemployed black youths, yet appropriate tax credits or deductions to small businesses precisely for such employees seem likely to increase their numbers substantially. Combined with a reduction of paperwork so onerous for small business, and especially with respect to a work force that is demographically and vocationally quite volatile and temporary in its commitments (many are either in school or in those various forms of transition common to late adolescence), incentives designed for this purpose seem promising.

*Institutions like churches, libraries, and voluntary organizations* should be drawn directly into the task of designing employment for teenagers. Adult guidance seems even more important for *attitudinal* training than for training in specific job skills. The technical question is how to empower such institutions to furnish sound employment, of which most of them, involving labor-intensive work, are much in need. The problems of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Administration (CETA) programs, which attempted to do something like this but with a very heavy governmental overlay, are well-known. The amount of money spent seems disproportionate to the actual number of employees put to work and to the amount of wages actually paid. Significantly, the philosophy of CETA involved a high degree of governmental management. A policy which placed greater reliance upon local mediating structures, while drawing upon governmental resources as a catalyst, would entail a technically different design.

## Assisting mediating institutions

The involvement of many citizens in meeting local needs is a good to be desired. How can the government stimulate, and financially catalyze, such involvement? Instead of thinking of the state as the agency of first and full responsibility, can we learn to think of it as an empowering agency—neither administering nor doing so many tasks, but helping to stimulate other social agencies to do them?

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[4] See David L. Birch, "Who Creates Jobs?" *The Public Interest*, Fall 1981.

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One suggestion that may have some merit is offered by Stephen Roman and Eugene Loebl in their stimulating book, *The Responsible Society*.[5] Self-consciously, they try to conceive of government as a catalyzing rather than as a managerial agent. One device they recommend is that the government create a fund for certain types of socially necessary activities, from which private institutions may borrow at greatly reduced interest rates. (Such programs are already in operation for agricultural purposes.) As such institutions repay these loans, the fund is replenished. The burden falls upon such institutions to make such employment as they offer financially productive. Imagine, for example, that a local church or benevolent organization would borrow from this fund sufficient capital to employ ten youngsters as plasterers, painters, carpenters, and repairmen, under supervision and at something above the minimum wage, in the repair and restoration of local housing. In many neighborhoods, there is visible work to be done, and some in the community would be willing to pay at least modest sums to have it done. It is likely that local enterprises might succeed where governmental agencies have not, and at lower public costs.

Another suggestion is to turn more seriously to the churches of America. There is virtually no local community, no village, without its church. Most of these churches are already involved in social action of various sorts. It is said that the churches cannot undertake to meet vast and expensive social problems alone; they cannot collect sufficient funds; they do not have all the necessary forms of expertise; they cannot properly manage functions which are not properly their own. No one, of course, thinks of the churches as the only, or even as the primary, social agencies of the land, yet they are a critical resource, drawing upon the ideals and energies of more than 100 million Americans. How might we arrange our national approach to social necessities so as to make it possible for the churches to extend their activities more efficiently and further than they already have, and to do so better, and with greater humaneness, than government can? There will always be tasks which government alone can do, and some which government does best. Still, how can the expensive overload in government be lessened so that funds available to government might be used with greater effect and deeper affect? Society is larger than the state, and churches are an important part of our national social life. The present generation of ecumenism and cooperation, bridging many ancient sectarian chasms, offers a fresh op-

[5] Regina Ryan Books/Two Continents Pub. Group, Ltd., 1977.

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portunity to the nation. Habits of cooperation nourished now for some twenty years place these institutions in a new light in American society. Things before impossible now seem at least possible. Can we not take advantage of the moment?

A great deal of technical skill will be required, on a more practical level, to bring activist government support to private social agencies. The technical difficulty lies in the fact that when government acts it tends to overpower and otherwise to weaken less powerful agencies. Secondly, since government is not disciplined by market forces or market costs or other forms of private restraint, it must regulate and police its own actions. Hence, government can scarcely move without great and cumbersome administrative machinery. In establishing welfare agencies, for example, government typically establishes eligibility requirements which are exceedingly difficult to administer, regulate, and police. Thus, the technical skill required to use governmental power in ways as simple and direct as possible, without generating a vast bureaucratic workload, is of a very high order. It is higher than that to which a mere philosopher or theologian may aspire.

## Government as activist catalyst

The republic is not where it was twenty years ago. New things are possible. One universal public policy for a nation of continental size, of tremendously varied climates, economic bases, and local cultures, carries within it the seed of local abuse and local ridicule. By contrast, a public policy rooted in local communities, but catalyzed and assisted in its necessities by a vigilant national administration, more closely fits the texture of reality. Public policy must increasingly embody the common sense law that high morale depends disproportionately on local satisfaction, for local reality is cut closer to the human scale. To discipline local communities to national ideals, there exist potent national media, and national government upholds the constitutional law binding upon all. But national government itself cannot manage a national community.

The ideal of democratic capitalism is to bring the three independent, interdependent systems—the political system, the economic system, the moral-cultural system—into harmonious collaboration. Moral-cultural institutions like the churches, the schools, families, and the press cannot meet our social problems alone. Economic institutions like the great corporations, the unions, and small businesses cannot meet them alone. Political institutions like the agencies of govern-

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ment cannot meet them alone. If it was an earlier error to rely solely upon individuals, and a later error to rely too much upon the state, self-knowledge suggests a new approach to public policy through empowering other social agencies besides the state. Adopted step by step and pragmatically, sorting out what works from what does not work, this approach may carry the American experiment forward in ways at once original and also consistent with its founding ideal. In its view, government must remain activist, but in a catalyzing, rather than in a managerial, way. Its philosophy is not to ask what government can do for its citizens, but how it can empower them, in strong local communities, to do for themselves. It is neither individualist not collectivist, neither socialist nor laissez-faire. *Annuit coeptis*: It is a new beginning.

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# Behind the tax-exempt schools debate

JEREMY RABKIN

THE Reagan administration must have anticipated some controversy when it announced on January 8, 1982 that it would no longer withhold tax exemptions from "discriminatory" private schools, but it surely did not anticipate the enormous uproar that ensued. *The New York Times* called the decision "tax exempt hate" in no less than four editorials over the next six weeks, *The Washington Post* stated that the administration's "maneuver" did not "deserve anything but reproach"; and syndicated columnist Carl Rowan, among others, was quick to raise the charge of racism.

Naive the administration may well have been, but the media coverage of the controversy was considerably more naive—if not intentionally misleading. Treasury officials had explained in their January 8 announcement that they had decided the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) had no statutory authority to condition tax exempt status on non-discriminatory policies. Only four days later, though, the White House announced that it would sponsor new legislation precisely to provide this authority to IRS. The White House proposal may have been a face-saving concession to public indignation, as critics charged, but its prompt enactment by Congress would surely have settled the matter once and for all. Congress, however, did nothing.

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In fact, while the *Times* and the *Post* spoke repeatedly of the "well settled law" in this area, IRS regulation of private schools has actually been subject to continual legislative challenge over the past several years. One reason the administration's bill never came to a vote in Congress was precisely that a sizeable group of legislators are strongly opposed to confirming such regulatory authority in IRS. But the administration could surely have mustered the votes for its bill if civil rights advocates had not so vehemently opposed it.

There is much more at stake than mere partisan skirmishing. Through their blocking efforts in Congress and legal maneuvering in the lower courts, civil rights groups finally succeeded in forcing the administration in late February to take a test case before the Supreme Court. Yet civil rights lawyers actually had good reason to fear they might lose their case before the high court. Thus the civil rights activists and their allies showed themselves ready to risk a major defeat on the policy at stake rather than permit any congressional response that might lend some political legitimacy—however grudging or indirect—to the administration's initial questioning of IRS authority in this area.

This curious gamble points to the real issue in contention: whether elected officials may reclaim policy-making authority from activist judges once the magic words "civil rights" have been floated through a policy dispute. The fortunes of the so-called "segregation academies" are, in many ways, rather peripheral to the whole controversy; the fortunes of representative government are not. A closer look at the sources of the IRS controversy has much to teach about the distorted symbols—and unaccountable syndicates—by which so much government policy has been made in the past few decades.

## Segregation is not the issue

To begin with, all the talk about "segregation academies" is rather misleading. No private school—whatever its tax status—may legally refuse to admit black students on grounds of race. Black students may enforce their right to equal consideration at any private school by direct action in federal court. This was established by the Supreme Court's 1976 decision in *Runyan v. McCrary,* which derived this right from a construction of an 1866 civil rights enactment. Nothing the Reagan administration did—or could have done—in relation to tax policy would have allowed any private school to maintain a racial exclusion policy.

There are, to be sure, a certain number of private schools estab-

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lished for the precise purpose of providing all-white refuges from integration in the public schools. In the early 1970's, when the IRS first required private schools to announce a policy of non-discrimination to qualify for tax exempt status, it found almost 100 schools across the country refusing to declare such a policy. There may be many other schools seeking to remain all white, unknown to the IRS because they have never applied for tax exempt status. Of course, most of these schools have remained all white because blacks have rarely found it worth the trouble to force their way into such racist institutions (most of which are not very good schools in any case).

On the other hand, there are thousands of private schools that remain all white despite their announced policy of non-discrimination. Black parents may find their fees too high or their religious affiliations or curricular emphasis uncongenial; perhaps they suspect the schools of hidden racism or experience peer pressure from other black parents not to desert the public schools. But the question for tax policy is not whether such schools should be forced to admit black students, but whether they should be forced to make themselves more inviting and attractive to blacks. That is not, in fact, an easy question to resolve. To entice more black applicants, some schools may have to soften those institutional characteristics—such as a strong sectarian emphasis—which are most prized by their current students, and for reasons having nothing to do with race. Almost everyone will acknowledge the problem when considering the Orthodox yeshivah or the "Lithuanian Culture Society" school. But the claim of the fundamentalist "bible academy" may be no less valid—even if civil rights activists denounce it as a "segregation academy." It is simply not that easy to decide which schools seek a "different" image *for the sake* of repelling black applicants.[1] The clearest offenders, moreover, may be the least susceptible to IRS pressure, since they may be the schools most prepared to forfeit the advantages of tax exemption rather than make efforts to recruit or accommodate black students.

It is quite revealing that the loudest critics of the January 8 announcement showed virtually no interest in the nature of the regulatory leverage available to IRS. The administration was not denounced for discarding a useful tool in achieving school integration, but for "subsidizing racism." Charles Manatt, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, insisted, for example, that the adminis-

[1] See Peter Skerry, "Christian Schools versus the I.R.S." *The Public Interest*, Fall 1980.

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tration's decision had "effectively made every American taxpayer a forced contributor to segregationist schools." Thus the issue was raised from a question of debatable regulatory policy to a matter of basic moral principle.

### The morality of tax exemptions

But the principle at stake is, after all, rather elusive. Does the tax-exempt status of the Catholic Church make "every American taxpayer a forced contributor" to the Church? One supposes the First Amendment would forbid tax exemptions for all religious institutions if this logic held true. But that is not what most people think, and the Supreme Court emphatically endorsed this conventional wisdom in its 1970 decision, *Walz v. Tax Commissioner*, affirming the constitutionality of tax exemptions for church property. No doubt tax exemptions are very helpful to the church; yet the Court still held that tax exemptions are not (in constitutional terms) a subsidy, but a means of avoiding "excessive entanglement" between church and state.

The distinction is not an exercise in legalistic logic-chopping. The equation of tax exemptions with direct subsidies may seem perfectly natural to those who equate "tax expenditures" (i.e., foregone revenues) with budgetary appropriations. But such reasoning rests on the untenable assumption that economics has already defined the "proper" distribution of tax burdens, from which every deviation can be regarded as a special favor to the beneficiary. In fact, economists vigorously disagree on the proper criteria for defining "income" and the proper method of apportioning taxes, even where maximizing government revenue is the sole point at issue. Thus some economists maintain that we would do better to eliminate all taxes on corporate earnings and tap each corporation's profits exclusively through the dividend income of its shareholders. But adopting this approach would hardly imply a moral endorsement of General Motors or corresponding public censure of GM shareholders.

Tax policy may reflect moral judgments—as the high taxes levied on alcohol and cigarettes may illustrate—and it certainly reflects many considerations other than maximizing revenue or economic efficiency. To see every tax benefit as a sign of official favor is not merely foolish but ultimately rather sinister in its implications. The public is entitled to demand a good deal of accountability from publicly funded institutions, and the "state action" doctrine in con-

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stitutional law makes government itself legally accountable for the behavior of publicly funded institutions in certain crucial respects. If government retains the same legal and moral responsibility for every beneficiary of a tax advantage, though, the "private sector" has become an empty phrase. Virtually every organization in America, incorporated or unincorporated, commercial or non-profit, finds some sort of deduction or credit in the tax code to its advantage. We might avoid the absurdity of regarding every organization as quasi-public for this reason by limiting the notion of special accountability to those organizations that pay no taxes at all. This may or may not be a useful distinction, but it is hard to see how it arises from *principle*. Tax exemptions, like any other tax benefit, serve a variety of functions and reflect a variety of rationales—without necessarily implying any greater degree of public sponsorship or moral endorsement.[2]

Nor is it true that civil rights laws impose any special responsibilities on tax-exempt organizations. The claim has been made in some quarters that the change in IRS policy toward private schools violates Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of "race, color or national origin" in "any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." There is no indication in the legislative history, however, that Congress considered tax exemptions or any other tax benefit as "federal financial assistance" in the meaning of Title VI. Even die-hard southern opponents of the Civil Rights Act, who strained to discredit the measure with every perverse construction imaginable, never dared to suggest this interpretation. IRS itself has never maintained that Title VI applies to tax benefits. It has never drawn up the formal implementing regulations which the statute requires of all federal funding agencies with Title VI enforcement responsibilities. IRS has never, in fact, required museums, scientific institutes, or most other tax-exempt institutions—apart from private schools—to certify a non-discrimination policy in order to retain their tax exemptions. And civil rights activists have never thought this grounds for controversy or complaint.

Where did the special treatment of tax-exempt schools come from? The Treasury Department was quite correct in its claim that the policy on private schools during the 1970's was not based on the civil rights laws, on the tax laws, or on any other laws. It derived

[2] It is equally unclear that institutions eligible for tax-deductible contributions are receiving a distinct moral sanction. Private contributions to churches and schools are tax-deductible, but so are payments to banks for home mortgages.

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whatever legal support it could muster from a federal court decision. More than anything else, it was precisely the administration's willingness to discount this court decision that seemed to provoke outrage. Unlike all previous administrations since 1970, the Reagan administration decided not to join the Washington activists and federal judges who, with the cooperation of willing bureaucrats, have been making policy on their own in this area. The decision to demand authorization from Congress was doubtless perceived as more threatening—because threatening to the existing system of decision-making—than anything that might have been said or done about actual "segregation academies."

## History of tax-exemption litigation

The court decisions which changed IRS policy in this area are perfect models of irresponsible judicial activism. The litigation began in 1969 with a suit against the Treasury by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, a Washington-based group. *Green v. Kennedy* complained about tax exemptions for segregated private schools in Mississippi, but it was filed, characteristically, in the D.C. district court. The nominal plaintiffs (black parents in Mississippi) did not want to enroll their children in private schools; their complaint was that the *existence* of segregated private schools was undermining integration in the public schools. By granting tax exemptions to these schools, the Lawyers Committee charged, IRS was threatening the right of these parents to an integrated education for their children.

The suit was framed as a challenge to tax exemptions in Mississippi because a federal judge had recently struck down that state's system of tuition grants to private schools as an unconstitutional means of perpetuating segregation. The Mississippi case, *Coffey v. Education Finance Commission,* relied on the fact that the state had established these special grants only when the public schools were forced to desegregate in the mid-1960's, at a time when "private" schools were being established throughout the state (often with teachers and facilities transferred directly from the public schools) as a means of circumventing public school integration. As a practical matter, every recipient of these grants seems to have been enrolled in an actual "segregation academy." But the IRS had been making tax exemptions available to all private schools all along and no one in the *Green* case ever suggested that IRS had the *intention* of thwarting public school integration. Nor was it ever established in *Green* that IRS policy even had the effect of thwarting integration,

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since it was quite uncertain that any of the "segregation academies" actually depended on tax exemptions for their continued existence.

The Justice Department made some effort to defeat the *Green* suit at the outset by challenging the plaintiffs' standing to sue. The government's case was a strong one. Standing in federal court requires at least a showing of "concrete injury" from the conduct which a would-be litigant seeks to challenge. Under the circumstances, it was hard to see how the "plaintiffs" had really sustained "concrete injury" from IRS. For some reason, the Justice Department failed to stress a more immediate barrier: Congress had gone out of its way to shield IRS operations from judicial challenges, except through the carefully defined procedures of a protest in tax court or a post-payment suit for refund *by the taxpayer himself.* The so-called "Tax Anti-Injunction Act" prohibits "any suit for the purpose of restraining the *assessment* or collection of tax . . . in any court by any person" and the Declaratory Judgment Act bars declaratory judgments in "any controversy with respect to federal taxes." But the D.C. district court swept all these technicalities aside without discussion. Citing "grave constitutional questions," the court issued a preliminary injunction in June 1970, requiring IRS to suspend assurances of tax-exempt status to private schools in Mississippi "unless and until IRS determines that a school is not part of a system of private schools operated on a racially segregated basis as an alternative to white students seeking to avoid desegregated public schools."

In any event, the Court did not hold tax exemptions for discriminatory schools unconstitutional—a decision which would have had explosive implications for tax policy and would have been quite hard to square with the Supreme Court's holding that tax exemptions for churches are *not* unconstitutional. Instead, the court relied on a far more vague, and potentially more far-reaching, rationale. It announced that the relevant provisions of the Internal Revenue Code "must be construed and applied in consonance with the Federal public policy against support for racial segregation of schools, public or private." The court pointed to a line of Supreme Court decisions "establishing public policy as a limitation on tax benefits." But these precedents, dealing with the deduction for "necessary business expenses," were not really apposite.[3]

[3] The leading case, *Tank Truck Rentals v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue* (1958), held that a company could not deduct fines paid for violations of state highway laws, given "the presumption against congressional intent to encourage violations of declared public policy." The *Tank Truck* decision stressed that "the test of nondeductibility is the severity and immediacy of the frustra-

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The IRS was apparently quite satisfied with the decision, however. Indeed, even before the final decision in *Green*, IRS had announced on its own (shortly after the preliminary injunction had been issued) that it would henceforth deny tax exemptions to any private school in the country that practiced racial discrimination in admissions. The final *Green* decision commended IRS on this change in policy, which IRS had justified with a slightly different, though no less questionable, rationale.[4] The court had insisted on going ahead with its own decision, despite apparent agreement between the government and the "plaintiffs" (which should have rendered the case moot), because "plaintiffs are entitled to relief on an enduring, permanent basis." Not surprisingly, IRS did not appeal this decision, which essentially affirmed its own policy.

An attempt to appeal the decision was made by a group of white parents in Mississippi. But the Supreme Court could not bring itself to question the consensus now prevailing among all the other parties —even if it could not actually endorse their legal reasoning. The court simply issued a summary affirmance of *Green*, refusing to hear oral argument and refusing to offer any opinion of its own. The court did betray its bad conscience about the case some years later, however, when it noted in a footnote to another case that *Green* "lacks precedential weight." (The context of this admission was itself revealing: When Bob Jones University sought to question the lifting of its tax exemption under the new IRS policy, both the Treasury and the lower courts discovered that the statutory barriers to pre-payment court challenges—ignored for the *Green* plaintiffs—must apply to Bob Jones; and the Supreme Court agreed, insisting that Bob Jones must first pay some taxes and then challenge its obligations in a refund suit. The admission in the footnote suggested that Bob Jones might indeed prevail if it did challenge.)

As so often happens in public interest litigation, the easy triumph of the Lawyers Committee in the first rounds of *Green* simply increased its ambition. In 1976 the Washington lawyers returned to

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tion ['of sharply defined national or state policies'] resulting from allowance of the deduction." And in a later decision, *Commissioner v. Tellier* (1966), the Supreme Court reaffirmed that the "public policy" limitation applied only "in extremely limited circumstances" because "the federal income tax is a tax on net income, not a sanction against wrongdoing." The *Green* decision, by contrast, treated the "public policy" limitation precisely as an open-ended "sanction against wrong-doing."

[4] IRS cited cases dealing with state recognition of "charitable trusts" to support its view that charity must be non-discriminatory. Among other defects, this argument ignored the plain language of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, which provides separate exemptions for "religious, charitable, educational," and other classified institutions.

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court, demanding that IRS do more than simply require private schools to give public notice of a nondiscriminatory policy. This was not stemming the flight of white students from the public schools or doing enough to integrate private schools. The lawyers not only sought a reopening of *Green*, but simultaneously filed a national class action suit to ensure that new court orders would apply nationwide. Once again, IRS made a show of resistance in court and then gave way to the demands of the civil rights attorneys in Washington. In August of 1978—after two years of closed negotiations with the Lawyers Committee, from which all private school representatives were excluded—IRS announced an ambitious new regulatory policy in this field. To retain a tax exemption, any private school "established or expanded at the time of public school desegregation" must enroll a specified quota of black students—or demonstrate that it had attempted to do so with an extensive program of affirmative action (including such devices as special scholarships for black students).

## IRS acquiescence, Congressional rebuttal

Congress had been no more inclined to question the tortured reasoning of the original *Green* decision than the Supreme Court. Whatever their legal claims, southern racists did not inspire many champions by the early 1970's. Both the IRS and the civil rights lawyers were therefore rather astonished when the 1978 rules met with a tremendous burst of controversy. Christian fundamentalist groups, mobilizing to defend the hundreds of "Christian schools" that had sprung up across the South (and other parts of the country) in the preceding decade, poured a torrent of hostile mail on IRS. These groups were further inflamed when IRS—seeking to demonstrate its "reasonableness"—modified the new rule in February 1979 to exempt Jewish day schools and Catholic parochial schools from the affirmative action requirements. In response to the uproar, Congress slapped a set of riders on the Treasury appropriation in the summer of 1979, prohibiting IRS from enforcing the new regulation or any other rule for private schools not in effect before August 1978.

The sudden intervention of Congress quelled the judicial appetite for independent policy-making in this area—but only for a time. In the fall of 1979, Judge George Hart of the D.C. district court dismissed the national class action suit, announcing that black parents did not have standing for such a suit. Barely six months later, however, the same judge ruled that the *Green* plaintiffs were entitled

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to further relief in Mississippi even though IRS had not, in fact, violated the original court order (which had been the premise of the Lawyers Committee's effort to reopen the case). Without any mention of the congressional riders, Judge Hart ordered IRS to revoke the tax exemptions of all Mississippi private schools "established or expanded at the time of public school desegregation" unless they had enrolled a "significant number" of blacks or pursued extensive affirmative action efforts.

Not surprisingly, IRS did not object to being "compelled" in this way to follow its own proposed rules of the year before. It made no effort to appeal Judge Hart's ruling, despite the numerous irregularities involved. In fact, it invited the decision by suggesting to Judge Hart in its "defense" briefs that the congressional riders might be circumvented by reading them as applying only to new IRS (rather than new judicial) rules—or alternately by finding them an unconstitutional interference with the duty of the executive branch to enforce the law. IRS did nothing to support the petition of Mississippi Christian schools to enter the case so that someone might plead the impropriety of the new court order. Judge Hart preemptively denied their right to intervene, affirming the demands for their exclusion by the civil rights lawyers.

With the regulated interests neatly excluded from their maneuvers, IRS and the civil rights lawyers had only one remaining problem: The new court orders applied only to Mississippi and the congressional riders seemed to bar IRS from following suit in the rest of the country. So a three judge panel of the D.C. Court of Appeals—over the vigorous protest of one judge on the panel—ruled in early 1981 that the national class action be reinstated. Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg conceded in her opinion that a number of Supreme Court decisions did seem to exclude standing for such a challenge, but she insisted that the court was entitled to disregard these decisions in favor of apparently conflicting decisions that would support standing. She also announced that the congressional riders were not intended to bar more extensive IRS requirements imposed by court order. But as the case went back to Judge Hart for a decision on the merits, Congress reenacted the same appropriations riders with an additional explicit ban on further IRS action "pursuant to court order."

Meanwhile, Bob Jones University, told by the Supreme Court in 1974 that it could not share the *Green* plaintiffs' privilege of contesting IRS policies without first paying some tax, dutifully paid some tax and sued for recovery in federal district court. (Though

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the fundamentalist college did have a non-discriminatory admissions policy, it lost its tax exemption for maintaining a ban on interracial dating.) A federal judge in South Carolina actually ruled in favor of the college's tax claim in December of 1978. In an extremely lucid and tightly argued opinion, the judge held that IRS had no statutory authority to condition tax exemptions on correct racial policy and that the *Green* decision was faulty in its reasoning. When the IRS appealed this ruling to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, one judge on the three judge panel endorsed the lower court decision, but two others voted to reverse the decision, insisting that *Green* had properly settled the question of IRS authority. When the Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal from Bob Jones last October, the Reagan Justice Department at first prepared to defend the IRS position. It was at this point that top officials at Justice and Treasury reconsidered their position and decided that Bob Jones —and the two lower court judges that agreed with its position— actually had the better case.

## How to challenge "the judicial power"?

The outcry against the current administration turnabout brought to light the deepest stakes in the controversy. The charge of "lawlessness" has force only if the "rule of law" is equated with outright judicial sovereignty. And this, essentially, was the position of the critics: "The law" is whatever a judge says it is, and once a judicial judgment is expressed in one case it becomes binding on the executive in all others. The natural collary of this view is that judges must step in to decide any dispute about administrative duties under the law lest the executive branch misconstrue its lawful obligations. This is a view with great appeal to supporters of judicial activism, but it is not the view ordained by the Constitution.

The Constitution assigns to the President—not to the courts—the responsibility to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." The Constitution limits "the judicial power" to the resolution of "cases and controversies"—that is, to genuinely adversary contests, conforming to the requisites of a lawsuit. There is no question that every judicial decision (unless overruled by a higher court) must be binding on the immediate parties to the case, even if one of the parties is a government agency. If this were not so, "the judicial power" would be reduced to the "power" of offering advice. But executive officers have an independent authority to interpret the law. They need not be bound by particular judicial decisions—out-

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side the confines of the immediate cases involved—any more than federal judges are bound by the legal interpretations of federal judges in other districts or other circuits.

By announcing that it would grant tax exemptions to Bob Jones University and to all other schools (presumably excluding those in Mississippi), the current administration was thus acting quite lawfully. Since the national class action had not yet issued an injunction (or even a final decision on the merits), IRS policy outside Mississippi was not bound by *any* court order. To be sure, the *Green* decision of 1971 had cautioned that it was "not to be misunderstood as laying down a special rule for schools located in Mississippi." But as the *Green* case was framed as an attack on IRS policy in that state alone, the court had no authority to dictate IRS policy elsewhere. (There is even some question whether the *Green* court had authority to bind IRS policy throughout Mississippi, since the court had carelessly neglected to certify the suit as a state-wide class action.) The Supreme Court itself could only affirm the result in Mississippi. And while a Supreme Court decision would normally have very great weight as a construction of the law, the high court subsequently went out of its way, as we have seen, to disclaim such "precedential weight" for its summary affirmance of *Green*.

This may seem a rather hair-splitting approach to the "lawfulness" of the current administration's position. But what, after all, should the administration have done if it truly believed—as it certainly had reason to believe—that the *Green* decision was improper? *The New York Times* thought their duty was quite obvious: "They know and every lawyer knows how to proceed against a court interpretation of a law one dislikes: ask a judge to set aside a judgment." Instead of doing this, the *Times* protested, "The Administration . . . has asked the Supreme Court to throw out two cases that test the same legal interpretation the Administration doesn't like." Yet how was the Justice Department to "test" the claims of Bob Jones University (and of Goldsboro Christian Schools in the companion case) if Justice came to agree with their claims? Was the government supposed to "defend" a policy it no longer thought defensible? Or was the Supreme Court supposed to hear a "case" in which both parties agreed?

The attitude displayed by the *Times* and by a number of law professors at the February congressional hearings on the Reagan bill was indeed characteristic of the *Green* litigation from the outset: The law is to be made by judges and a proper lawsuit is hardly necessary for judges to intervene. In this case a proper law suit was

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hardly supplied. In *Green v. Kennedy* the "contending" parties were never in serious disagreement. Those who did seek to argue the other side were repeatedly swept aside without a real hearing; having a concrete property or liberty interest of their own at stake, the private schools were evidently considered too self-interested to participate in "public interest" litigation. From the beginning the *Green* litigation was about redirecting public policy in the tax field and not about the proper judicial role in defending personal rights.

What, after all, were the "rights" contended for by the nominal plaintiffs in *Green*? Certainly not the right to be considered by private schools without reference to race or color. Many schools in the South may have wished to exclude blacks, but in more than a decade of litigation the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights never produced a single example of a tax-exempt school that had actually turned away black students seeking to attend. It was precisely because the right of blacks to attend private schools was *not* the issue that the Supreme Court's decision in *Runyan* had no effect on the *Green* litigation. As became most apparent in the later stages of *Green*, the litigation was essentially about how the IRS ought to employ its regulatory leverage as a matter of public policy. (Even in the opening rounds, the Lawyers Committee cited public interest actions against the FCC and FPC as precedent for their "clients'" standing).

To be sure, some people—including many lawyers and law professors—regard it as pointlessly pedantic to restrict the judicial purview to claims about actual personal rights. Many federal judges came to agree with this view in the early 1970's, especially in the D.C. Circuit. Accordingly they welcomed "public interest" advocates into their courtrooms to pursue generalized claims of impropriety in government, even when the advocates' own rights were unrelated to the controversy. Thus judges ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to adopt tougher pollution standards, ordered the Food and Drug Administration to take "inefficacious" drugs off the market, ordered the Federal Communications Commission to consider the cultural value of broadcast programming in license renewals, and so forth, all at the behest of "public interest" lawyers.

The Supreme Court began to have second thoughts about this expanded judicial role, and by the mid-1970's was insisting on more restrictive limitations on standing to sue. To Ralph Nader that was "a declaration of tyranny" because "it prevents 215 million Americans from obtaining review in the courts of their claims that

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the Government is acting unlawfully in particular instances." In fact, all government functions rest on legal constructions of one sort or another. The Nader claim—that every citizen must be able to challenge every legal construction he disagrees with—thus amounts to the assertion that free government requires a universal, and continual, judicial review. This has the awkward consequence of rendering congressional oversight and presidential control—the machinery of democracy—rather superfluous.

The lower courts have begun to heed the Supreme Court's demand for tightened standing requirements and to limit the occasions for judicial intervention in administrative affairs. But "civil rights" cases are widely regarded as a necessary exception. Thus Judge Skelly Wright, the former chief judge of the D.C. Circuit Court, confessed in a 1979 speech that judges "should be more reluctant than we have been to fault the other agencies of government and also more hesitant about filling the void when, in our judgment, the elected branches of government should have acted and failed." But he immediately added "one important exception: the area of equal rights for disadvantaged minorities. As to that, I remain an uncompromising 'activist.' " That perspective helps explain the progress of the *Green* litigation into the current decade.

### Beyond the tax-exemption controversy

It is doubtful that the Supreme Court was very happy to inherit this tangled mess, but that is where the controversy has now landed. In a rather irregular proceeding at the end of February, the D.C. Court of Appeals issued an injunction against IRS approval of tax exempt status for Bob Jones University or any other "discriminatory" school—ostensibly to preserve the status quo in the national class action suit which had not even been decided in district court. (Bob Jones, of course, was denied any opportunity to appear in this proceeding.) For some reason, the Justice Department did not appeal this order but instead maneuvered to get the Bob Jones case before the Supreme Court with the strange device of a split brief, arguing both for and against the school's position. After hesitating for almost two months, the Supreme Court finally agreed, in late April, to hear the case this fall.

Yet to speak of the "case" in these circumstances is to invoke a formality that the court itself barely acknowledged in agreeing to provide a "decision." The court rejected requests by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights to join its suit against IRS with the

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appeal by Bob Jones. It even rejected a petition by the NAACP to defend the pre-January IRS position as an interested *amicus* in oral argument. As if to demonstrate that its decisional authority has nothing to do with the actual parties to actual lawsuits, the Court suddenly invited William Coleman, Jr. to argue the propriety of non-discrimination requirements by IRS—though Coleman had filed no motions of his own to appear and had no known connection with any aspect of the case or the larger controversy. Evidently, Coleman will simply represent himself. But the justices must have discovered that Coleman, a black attorney who was Secretary of Transportation in the Ford administration, would argue a view of IRS authority adverse to the view shared by the Justice Department and Bob Jones University. Coleman's introduction into the case was the court's way of assuring some opposing argument in the absence of a genuine adversary contest—once universally regarded as the precondition for any judicial decision.

The actual dispute between Bob Jones and the Justice Department is now entirely hypothetical. Justice agrees that Congress *could* direct IRS to withhold tax exemptions from any institution practicing any form of "discrimination", though it concedes Congress has not yet done so and IRS therefore lacks any authority to proceed in this area at present. Bob Jones insists that, as a religious institution, it would have a First Amendment right to maintain its ban on inter-racial dating and any other policy motivated by its religious beliefs. It is a strained argument, though perhaps no more so than other interpretations of religious freedom endorsed by the Supreme Court in recent years.

The Supreme Court may indeed find this approach more politically convenient than a direct overruling of the *Green* decision. Transforming the dispute into a First Amendment question may make it seem all the more appropriate for judicial resolution. But the First Amendment question would never have arisen if the lower courts had not presumed to initiate new tax policies on their own. Congress has gone out of its way in the tax laws to avoid conflicts with churches and religious institutions, and with good reason. Is it really desirable to have the IRS sitting in judgment over the acceptability of religious claims and practices?

Even if the Court does support a religious exemption for Bob Jones in this case, it will be inviting further judicial interventions if it avoids overruling *Green*. Civil rights groups will doubtless try to challenge the religious *bona fides* of other schools. Moreover, nothing in *Green* limits its reach to schools or institutions with full

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tax exemptions (as opposed to other types of tax benefits). Feminists are already trying to get sex discrimination on the agenda for tax policy. It is easy to imagine many other groups suing to bring tax policy into line with their public policy goals if the Supreme Court does not now emphatically reserve such decisions for Congress.

The civil rights activists still seem to believe the Supreme Court will decide not to question past precedents, however untenable. And careerists in the Justice Department, having already issued two mass letters of protest against attempted policy shifts by the new Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, seem anxious to drive home the lesson: The courts are not to be challenged in policy questions that can be labeled "civil rights." But if the Court succeeds in imparting that lesson it will have to take on the burden of disciplining activist judges in the lower courts on its own. And the Supreme Court must realize that if it fails in that task it may ultimately face challenges from Congress that are far more threatening to judicial authority than anything in the current tax-exemption controversy.

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# The social roots of hunger and overpopulation

WILLIAM PETERSEN

For several generations those who argue about population and food have divided themselves between "optimists" and "pessimists." In fact, most of them are better termed extremists. Too often enormously complex problems have been presented with a one-dimensional simplicity—the contrast between people and their sustenance, with both projected into the future more confidently than past experience warrants.

The problem has largely been misstated. The dramatic photographs of children with swollen bellies indicate not a shortage of food worldwide, either now or in the foreseeable future, but rather institutional blocks that impede or prevent its distribution. In that larger context, neither a greater supply of foodstuffs nor more effective family-planning programs will solve "the population problem." For the problem so narrowly specified is in fact a general crisis, less technological than socio-political; it is not so much the means that are lacking as the ability to apply them. In the typical less developed country the state dominates much, particularly all the pathways to modernization. Bureaucracies are incompetent and often corrupt, and the middle class—the sector that brought about the transformation in the West that all now fervently desire—is small, weak, and beset by regulation. Partly for convenience, but also partly following its own anti-bourgeois ideology, the West

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funnels most of its aid and investments through the state, thus reenforcing state control.

Against that background, rapid population growth must be interpreted as an added burden to societies just barely managing to hold together. Many of the scarce jobs are improvised and more or less irrelevant to the broader economy, while each year thousands more reach working age. With every institution politicized, those unable to find jobs in a labor market seek them through family, tribal, or party preferment; when this is unavailable, they seek direct political action. Governments therefore spend much of their scant resources of skill and intelligence merely staying in power, their social and economic bungling aggravated by the growth in the number of persons affected. That is "the population problem" in the world today, the one that I want to outline here. But first it is necessary to discount the people-resources argument that still dominates conventional policy making.

## The unlikely imbalance

The population of the world is estimated to be about 4.5 billion, and to be growing by about 1.7 percent per year. This means that it will double in something like 40 years, so that, if the present estimated rate of increase continues, at the end of the century the world will have about 6.2 billion people. Many in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere are hungry, and a frightening number are starving. These two facts—the growth of the world's population and the persistence of food shortages—are usually linked: People must eat, and if there are more people, then supplying them with sustenance is more difficult. What could be simpler—or more misleading?

Let us start by examining more closely the alleged facts that we are to explain. Neither the number of the world's inhabitants nor its food supply is known with even moderate accuracy. An egregious example is China, whose population constitutes perhaps a fifth of the world's total. The number of that country's people may be 900 million, 950 million, a billion, or more, or less. The last census was in 1953; and the next one, announced for 1980 and then for 1981, is now planned for 1982. During this interim of almost a generation and a half, government spokesmen have issued, sometimes in the same year, official figures differing by more than 100 million —not in order to confuse foreign observers, but because they themselves have no idea of how many workers and consumers there are

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in this so-called planned economy. If even the gross total is unknown, then what can we say of the supposed birth rate of 20 per thousand, the supposed death rate of 8 per thousand? All policies in communist countries are, so long as they last, successful. When China's planners tried to stimulate births, the country's fertility rose. Now that they are endeavoring to cut both birth and death rates, both have come down. It may indeed be so, but any who accept these statistics on the basis of the evidence provided are naive.

Population data for other less developed countries are sometimes better, sometimes worse. The basis of most estimates for black Africa, for instance, is made up of equal parts inaccurate local counts, cumbrous mathematical formulas, and wishful thinking. Some of the best Western demographers have come up with figures that they themselves term guesses. But the issue is less what the population and natural increase of Mali or Uganda are today than what they will be a generation or two from now. And to that crucial question responsible analysts can hardly offer a guess.

The other side of the supposed imbalance, the world's production of food, is yet more elusive. There are the same areas of total ignorance, in particular China; and the relatively good statistics of some less developed countries are based on a fundamental flaw. Data on food production are mainly compiled from commercial transactions, a reasonable enough procedure for the industrial societies that we know best. But in places where hunger is endemic, a large, indeterminate, and often rapidly changing proportion of the food eaten is home-grown. What peasants raise to feed their families may constitute as much as half, say, of the total consumed without ever appearing in the laboriously maintained accounts. As the tables of per-capita GNP show, for a substantial number of countries there is far less income recorded than is needed for minimum subsistence. If the figures were correct, these nations would have disappeared in a matter of months.

It is manifestly impossible to draw an accurate balance for any one year between the world's people and the food they eat, and anyone who extrapolates a precarious estimate into the future should admit to extreme fallibility. With that hedge, I nevertheless profess a relative optimism concerning the relation we have been considering—between the population and the food production of the entire world. If we take the yields obtained by Iowa farmers (which are good but not the highest) and apply them to all arable land, the number of people who could be well fed is several times the world's present population, larger than any plausible projections over the

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next century or so.[1] The so-called green revolution, moreover, was seemingly only the modest start of a new type of vastly improved agriculture. Within a decade or two it may well be possible to create new varieties of grains and other crops that will thrive in hostile climates, far outproduce existent types, and—unlike present superplants—propagate themselves and establish new species. More generally, the potential for scientific advance is vast enough to warrant a supposition that no more than in the past will improved technology be overwhelmed by the growth of humans over the next hundred years or more.

This relative optimism pertains, however, to a worldwide crunch that does not exist and may never develop. Excessive multiplication of humans is not characteristic of developed countries. In industrial nations fertility and mortality are or apparently soon will be in balance, and this cessation in growth is inevitably linked to an aging of the population, and thus to a smaller proportion of workers relative to elderly dependents. The governments of Hungary in Eastern Europe and of France in Western Europe, to cite two prominent examples, have experimented with a series of pronatalist measures. West Germany is no less concerned about its demographic prospects, but politicians there are fearful of proposing pronatalist policies that might be reminiscent of the Nazi period. The dilemma facing the Soviet Union is neither a too slow nor a too rapid growth but a combination of both—the decline of fertility among Great Russians and other European stocks contrasted with persistently large families in the Muslim and other Asian components of the Soviet empire.

The most striking fact about the United States, finally, is how little attention the similar decline in the growth rate has received. The frenetic campaign for "zero population growth" reached a climax with the Rockefeller Commission, a quasi-official body that published report after report on the dangers of rapid growth while the American birth rate was falling to its lowest point in the nation's history.

## Confounding the "demographic transition"

This move toward a near-balance between births and deaths is in accord with the framework that has been used to map out the

[1] Roger Revelle, "Will the Earth's Land and Water Resources Be Sufficient for Future Populations?" *The Population Debate: Dimensions and Perspectives*, U.N. World Population Conference, Bucharest, 1974 (New York, 1975).

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population growth characteristic of the modern era. According to the so-called demographic transition, the history of the West can be roughly classified into three stages: Stage I, high fertility matched by an approximately equal mortality, with a consequent very slow growth of the population; Stage II, mortality, particularly that of infants, brought under increasing control and fertility continuing at a high rate, with a consequent rapid increase in the population; and Stage III, fertility controlled through the wider use of more efficient contraceptives, with birth and death rates once again in balance at much lower levels than when the cycle began.

In the 1920's, when this thesis was first enunciated, demographers believed that they well understood how and why the birth rates of Western nations were declining. The main impetus was the pressure exerted by population increase, and the main mechanism was the contraceptive means that, from the latter decades of the 19th century, were being developed, publicized, and legalized. Confidence in this mechanistic history was badly shaken by the totally unanticipated baby boom of the 1950's. Every shift in family size since then, as well as every new insight into the complexities of the historical past, demonstrated that—ad hoc theorizing apart—we do not really know even for our own society why potential parents decide to have or not to have another child. Even the truism that effective contraception facilitates control is not valid under all conditions: The spread of birth-control knowledge and practice among American teenagers has been accompanied by a disastrous rise in very early and often illegitimate pregnancies.

The key variable in the West's fertility decline was not access to the most effective contraceptives but rather the will to have smaller families. Post-famine Ireland brought marital fertility down to one of Europe's lowest by postponing marriages for some ten or fifteen years beyond puberty; France did so mainly by the widespread practice of coitus interruptus, backed by illegal but readily available abortions. The dictum of some economists that income is typically correlated with family size, though sometimes valid within a narrow range, flouts the principal fact about how the small-family system developed—namely, by a dissemination of the paradoxical norm that parents who are better able to care financially for their children have fewer of them. Most generally, the long debate over the legitimacy of birth control was not, if these designations have any broader meaning, merely between "traditionalist" and "modernist" forces. Perhaps the strongest opponents of Europe's neo-Malthusian leagues were the socialist parties, which particularly

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in Germany took an implacably moralistic stand that permeated the whole membership. And on the other side, from the 1920's liberal Protestantism and Judaism were among the most effective proponents of legal contraception.

According to the plausible theory developed by Richard Easterlin, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, one should not expect the long-term decline in birth rates once postulated, but rather a cycle in which relatively smaller and relatively larger families alternate in successive generations.[2] Easterlin's thesis, much discussed in scholarly journals, may be the best explanation to date. He has not attempted, however, to restore the axiomatic character of the first formulations of the demographic transition; their self-evident truths are gone for good, in both senses of that phrase.

## Five demographic contrasts

However, back in the 1950's the demographic transition included both a reconstruction of the West's history and a prophecy of the future of less developed countries. For several decades articles appeared showing graphs of population trends with two overlapping time scales—the past in Britain, for instance, and the future in India. Caught in the bind of a self-imposed historicism, the authors argued that the decline of India's birth rate could be reliably predicted simply because a curve drawn from Britain's birth rate in the 19th century so indicated. That the two cultures are not even similar was largely passed over, as were a number of differences in the socio-political and even demographic context of these presumed trends. There are at least five such basic contrasts.

1. Before the phenomenal rise in Europe's population, it was a sparsely peopled continent. Today's great cities were small towns, often no more than villages; such industrial areas as the English Midlands were mainly rural. In contrast, many of the densely populated regions of less developed countries—Java, Bengal, the Nile valley, and so on—had what could be considered a surplus of numbers before the sharp decline in mortality started. The lack of room for a relatively comfortable expansion has meant that, even apart from other aggravating factors, the increase of population in the latter case has been more deleterious to the societies and economies.

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[2] See in particular his *Population, Labor Force and Long Swings in Economic Growth: The American Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) and *Birth and Fortune: The Impact of Numbers on Personal Welfare* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

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2. An overflow from Europe's population emigrated to the almost empty spaces of the Americas and elsewhere, inhibited by few if any legal barriers and able to take advantage of competitive and often extraordinarily cheap fares. Today not only industrial nations but developing countries also impose immigration barriers; Burma and Thailand, for instance, impose immigration barriers against a feared flood of impoverished and unskilled emigrants from India. Though indeed the overall flow in world migration has shifted and is now from the less to the more developed countries, too few leave to mitigate any population pressure. On the contrary, since generally many of the emigrants are young adults with salable skills, their departure often worsens the plight of those remaining behind.

3. The control of early mortality in England, which we can take as a typical example of the West, took two hundred years. The considerable improvements in agriculture during the second half of the 18th century all but eliminated such food-deficiency diseases as scurvy and, though the evidence is no more than circumstantial, probably raised the general level of health. The effective separation of sewage from drinking water eliminated the threat of cholera in the middle of the 19th century. Some fifty years later most childhood diseases started their transition from major scourges to minor nuisances. The development of mass insecticides and antibiotics during and just after World War II brought the progress close to its present point and, one must suppose, also close to its end. Few laymen are aware of how far toward the presumably ultimate span of life medical science has come.[3]

This progress in the West, phenomenally fast if contrasted with all past human history, was ponderously slow as against the more recent decline of mortality in the less developed countries.

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[3] The American demographer Nathan Keyfitz has calculated what he terms cause-deleted life tables in order to see, for example, how much difference it would make, with all other mortality remaining at the current American rates, if there were no deaths at all from cancer (*Applied Mathematical Demography* (New York: Wiley, 1977), pp. 48-52). The average expectation of life would be raised by only two years, for most of those who would be saved from cancer are old enough to succumb rather soon to heart disease. The only advance that would make a substantial difference in America's average expectation of life would be to delete accidents, particularly automobile accidents, which are the major cause of death of children, adolescents, and young adults. Automobile accidents, however—like homicide, suicide, addiction, pollution, and other social disorders that result in fatalities—are hardly affected by medical or technological progress. Their impact can be lessened mainly by changes in law and other social institutions—but we often do not know what should be done or how to effect supposedly efficacious reforms.

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In Ceylon, as a prime example, the estimated expectation of life at birth jumped from 43 to 52 years in twelve months. The gain achieved from 1946 to 1947 had taken half a century in most Western countries. The amazing decline in mortality derived partly from one factor: DDT, an insecticide that had been developed during World War II, which when sprayed from airplanes over low-lying areas all but eliminated malaria, the principal cause of death, by killing the mosquitoes that carry it. Subsequently a learned debate ensued on what precisely caused the decline; the present consensus is that the antimalarial campaign was responsible for about half of the fall in the death rate between 1936-45 and 1945-60.[4] Similar antimalarial efforts were just as successful, or more so, in such varied countries as India, Greece, Mauritius, and Venezuela. Nor were advances in the control of mortality limited to malarial areas. In less developed countries as a unit, the mean life expectation is about 55 years, which means that in slightly over one generation they have made up about two-thirds of the difference between their typical pre-1945 level and the present average in advanced nations.

4. The most obvious consequence of this astoundingly rapid decline in mortality is, of course, that populations with an ineffective check on fertility will grow fast. In less developed countries the latest life-saving advances become available immediately, so that in the most extreme cases populations went in one step from witch doctors to antibiotics. Western techniques, moreover, have been applied by Western personnel (or, at best, by a tiny westernized elite) and largely paid for out of Westerners' taxes. The mass control of death has been made possible, in other words, with little or no change in the way of life of those affected, which connotes that the endogenous impetus for a corresponding decline in fertility is more or less lacking.

The contrast between the two situations can be highlighted by noting how the rural-urban difference in fertility has been blunted. In every Western country the historical fall of birth rates was led by city dwellers, whose innovative small-family pattern later spread to other sectors of the population. Cities grew largely by the inmigration of countrymen, and generally there was a self-selection of the literate, the most skilled and ambitious, who could best take advantage of new opportunities. Since competition for higher posts in urban enterprises was strong, most urban dwellers cut their fam-

[4] A good summary of analyses of mortality in Sri Lanka is given in Peter Newman, "Malaria and Mortality" *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, vol. 72 (1977), pp. 257-263.

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ily responsibilities in order to advance faster. Thus, in the early period of modernization, Western cities became nuclei of the more intelligent and innovative, more or less insulated from the rural mass and therefore better able to apply their collective will to the whole society's problems.

This is no longer true of Western cities, and it has never been true of the typical urban conglomerate of less developed countries. The vast rural-urban migration there is not motivated by the attraction of better jobs, of which there are few or none, but by an effort to escape from a population grown too large for the agricultural economy. The available data suggest that, compared with the rural birth rate, sometimes the urban one is lower, sometimes higher, with a lack of any significant difference as perhaps the commonest pattern. The innovative elite, to the degree that one exists in less developed countries, is drowned in a mass of destitute countrymen (or even more destitute refugees) who build their quasi-illegal shacks wherever land can be found and change the typical city from a problem solver to one of the nation's main problems.

5. Any of these trends become cumulative through the population's age structure. Most of the improvement has been in the control of early deaths, and every infant or child kept alive is almost equivalent to another birth. Fertility and mortality are not merely counteracting forces, as we think of them; one largely reinforces the other. Some 25 percent of the populations of industrial countries are under 15 years old, contrasted with about 40 percent in less developed countries as a whole, and a full half in a few of them. With so young a population and other things equal, fertility is much higher, for in such countries reproduction is a function mainly of adolescents and very young adults. The more the population grows, in other words, the greater the tendency for it to grow faster.

### Development as contraceptive?

No one any longer believes that the less developed countries will follow with the same time scale the historical path set by the demographic transition in the West. Many schemes have been offered to stimulate a decline in the birth rates, but essentially there are two positions, which were in sharp confrontation at the 1974 U.N. World Population Conference in Bucharest. One side, made up mainly of delegates from Communist countries, recommended a policy of laissez-faire: "Take care of the people and population will take care of itself," or "Development is the best contraceptive."

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Western delegates held that one must introduce control of fertility "artificially"—that is, outside the development of the economy and modernization of the society, through direct political intervention. That opposition between the two views was often so vehement suggests that neither thesis is entirely valid.

The contention that industrialization leads to smaller families is based on contrasts evident both in the past and the present. At neither time, however, is the relation clear-cut enough to justify simple causal inferences. In the 19th century birth rates fell in France, Ireland, and the United States well before they did in England, the nucleus of early industry. Variation within any one country was generally great, and not merely the standard differentiation between rural and urban, agrarian and mercantile-industrial areas. In Sweden, as one instance, the considerable range in marital fertility among agricultural districts as far back as 1860 was based not on different degrees of urban influence but on quite stable parochial patterns of family formation, implemented through some means of birth control.[5]

Among the newly industrializing countries (or NICs, as economists designate them), the presently most successful are Brazil and Mexico. Brazil has the tenth largest economy in the world and is the seventh largest producer of automobiles; in gross production Mexico's economy is about even with that of Sweden or Belgium. Figures compiled by the World Bank show that over the past eight years (adjusting for inflation) Brazil increased its investment at an annual rate of 10.7 percent, Mexico at 7.1 percent—and the United States at 1.6 percent. According to fears often voiced by American trade groups, NICs are moving along the same path as Japan, and the "unfair" competition from Japanese cars will be compounded by imports of textiles and other commodities from such countries.[6]

Brazil's birth rate, however, is estimated at 36 per thousand, which with a death rate of 8 means that its population is increasing by 2.8 percent per year, doubling in about 25 years. Mexico is in this respect even more troublesome for the thesis. With a birth rate of 41 and a death rate of 7, its population is increasing by 3.4 percent per year, doubling in 20 years. The same figures for the United States are a birth rate of 15, a death rate of 9, a natural increase of 0.6 percent, and a doubling time of 116 years. Meanwhile such Latin American countries as Barbados, Cuba, Guadeloupe, and Mar-

[5] Gösta Carlsson, "The Decline of Fertility: Innovation or Adjustment Process," *Population Studies*, vol. 20 (1966), pp. 149-174.
[6] *Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 1981.

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tinique (none of which anyone would call a NIC) all have birth rates of 20 or under. If "development is the best contraceptive," it obviously does not take effect quickly or certainly; and if it does in the long run, the run may be too long for most countries to withstand.

## The failure of birth-control programs

What then of the other side of the debate at Bucharest? Statements about the efficacy of birth-control programs in less developed countries vary according to their source (often the man in the field who carried out the project), the criterion of success (from a demonstrable decline in fertility to, however absurdly, the amount of money spent), and the country affected. Programs in fact cannot be evaluated unambiguously, for to measure their effect one should compare present fertility not with that of the recent past (for any of a dozen other factors may have been operative) but with the level of fertility there would have been without the program.

The sharpest declines have taken place in small countries with relatively stable governments: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Mauritius, Costa Rica, Trinidad, and so on. Of the 77 microstates—that is, nations with a 1970 population of less than half a million—79 percent are islands and 15 percent are coastal. Indeed, it was largely their isolation that in the postcolonial period kept the microstates independent, rather than being amalgamated into larger countries. For the same reason many are outposts of Western culture: 85 per cent are predominantly Christian, 91 percent have an official language taken over from Europe, and in most the expectation of life is 60 years or more. In short, they are intermediate between Western and non-Western in many of their cultural attributes, and the success of their family-planning programs should not be seen as a reliable indicator for similar efforts elsewhere.[7]

If we consider not these relatively insignificant microstates but rather the masses of humans in the major countries, the record of family-planning programs in the less developed world is far less clear. Take as one example India, after China the world's most populous nation. Nehru began with the opinion that the country was *under*populated, and during his lifetime nominal family-planning programs were grossly underfunded, run sometimes by principled opponents of contraception, and hardly efficacious. Later

[7] John C. Caldwell et al., "The Demography of Microstates" *World Development*, vol. 8 (1980), pp. 953-967.

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programs varied mainly in what contraceptive means were used, and eventually the effort was concentrated on vasectomies, which from the point of view of the state planners have the advantage of requiring only a single contact for each person affected. After a series of experiments that could be termed either partial failures or partial successes, the announced goal of reducing the birth rate to 25 per thousand in 1978-79 was put off until 1984—symbolically not the most propitious year.

In the mid-1970's Karan Singh, appointed Minister for Health and Family Planning, intensified prior efforts and announced that compulsory sterilization would not be introduced "at least for the time being," but only because "the administrative and medical infrastructure in many parts of the country is still not adequate to cope with the vast implications." Then Sanjay Gandhi, the Prime Minister's son, took on birth control as his special province and, with no official position, attacked the problem with his characteristic combination of enthusiasm and bullying. Civil servants were denied raises or transfers and sometimes even salaries until they had convinced a specified number of eligible parents to undergo sterilization. In some cities officials used the licensing of hotels, theaters, banks, airlines, and other businesses to force firms to induce their employees with three or more children to be sterilized. Opposition to the program was exacerbated by charges that the Hindu majority was using it to reduce the proportions of Untouchables and particularly Muslims. A Muslim slum was cleared of its inhabitants at gun point and then razed; when the people were allowed back to where their homes had been, they were given ration cards, which would be renewed only if the men underwent an operation forbidden by their religion. Police and family planners were killed; in one ugly incident, according to seven opposition Members of Parliament, several dozen protesters were shot down and 150 wounded in anti-sterilization riots. As Prime Minister Gandhi was forced to admit, "Some deaths have taken place, due to firing."

According to subsequent analyses, opposition to forced sterilizations was a significant reason for the fall of the Gandhi government in 1977. Under the Janata government, in office from 1977 to 1980, not only was forced sterilization strongly condemned but initially family planning was given scant attention. An effort to decentralize control was implemented by training Community Health Volunteers responsible for the health and contraceptive programs to be established in every village. The new Gandhi government established in 1980 reaffirmed its earlier nominal commitment to volun-

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tarism, and to date it has been reluctant to overstep the bounds of legality or propriety, presumably because the slightest recurrence of coercion would be politically dangerous. In short, the attempt to force the pace of birth control will probably reduce for decades the efficiency of government programs, which has never been very high. According to a number of prognoses by Indian demographers, the World Bank, and the United Nations, fertility is unlikely to fall to a replacement level before India's present population of 660 or 680 million grows to 1.2 or 1.5 billion.[8]

## Feeding a kleptocracy

If over the next decades population in the larger less developed countries (with China possibly an exception) is likely to continue to grow at substantial rates, will not food shortages become ever more disastrous? Possibly yes, but not in a direct sense. Efforts to bring people and food into balance comprise three more or less independent series of programs: to develop the economies toward an ultimate goal of making the countries self-sufficient, to feed those in direct need during the supposedly finite interim, and to cut fertility through birth-control programs. The fact that all three generally operate through the state is crucial, for the typical government of the less developed world is not efficient enough to accomplish any of these tasks. Or so the record to date would suggest.

The British sociologist Stanislav Andreski has coined the word "kleptocracy" to denote the rule by thieves that he found in his studies of Latin America and Africa. In these areas (as well as much of Asia, of course), the traditional economy stagnates and every minimally ambitious young man struggles to find an alternative to his father's way of life. But since private industry is small and often hampered by the government's hostility, the alternative is more or less restricted to government jobs, from cabinet officers through various levels of civil service down to the rural police force. Though the state has many more such functionaries than are useful, thousands more clamor for their chance at the posts, and every government must take its inherent instability into account. Since everyone knows that he may lose his livelihood next year, or next month, he tries—like virtually all his fellows—to make the most hay during his brief hours of sunshine. Bribery is part of doing business; officials

[8] James E. Kocher, "Population Policy in India: Recent Developments and Current Prospects," *Population and Development Review*, vol. 6 (1980), pp. 299-310.

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differ little in the degree of their rapacity. The rich maneuver successfully to evade taxes by bribing the tax collectors. Laws enacted to reform the system create new opportunities to impose tariffs on those who want to evade the new regulations.

Western journalists and analysts often give less attention to such graft and inefficiency than their prevalence and importance in less developed countries would justify. And all too frequently, when the thievery is mentioned, we are promptly reminded that our own society is not blameless. The difference, however, is fundamental, a contrast between an aberration and an all but universal system. Take as one example the distribution of donated food in Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest nations. According to an originally confidential report by Hjalmar Brundin, a consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development, less than 70 percent of the American wheat allocated to its Food for Work program there finds its way to the hungry people. Of the total 240,000 tons in the past period, in other words, about 80,000 tons were stolen.[9] Western relief administrators often accommodate to the corruption and help cover up the fraud. Some of those in the field believe that, like the crooked machines that used to run many American cities, the dishonest governments are the best that can be hoped for under the circumstances and that, in spite of their manifest faults, they do permit *some* of the urgently needed relief to get through. In occasional cases these arguments may indeed be well based, but behind them is a patent conflict of interest, for the Westerners are also demanding that their programs and their jobs continue to be funded.

A different kind of misallocation reflects the socio-political structure of Bangladesh and many other countries in the less developed category. The greatest misery is among the rural poor, who make up the vast majority of the population; but the far smaller number of city inhabitants, who might riot and overthrow the government if their supply is cut off, generally get a grossly disproportionate share of the food meant for the neediest. And if the bureaucrats of less developed countries often show an unfeeling indifference to the less powerful sectors of their own populations, they are even less solicitious of the needs of resident aliens. Destitute foreigners, typically refugees from political oppression or intergroup conflict, make up a horrible accumulation of misery. It is impossible to give more than the roughest estimate of the world total, not only because

[9] *Wall Street Journal,* April 20, 1981.

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counts are not well based but because the concept of "refugee" is cloudy. Since the end of World War II, more than 60 million persons could reasonably be so classified; the implication of this datum can be suggested by the fact that the usual estimate of the total emigration from all of Europe between 1800 and 1950 is also 60 million. Well over 15 million persons are refugees today, and though the figures do not permit precise comparisons, over the past several decades there has been a discernible upward trend.[10]

The recurrent difficulties in bringing relief were much in evidence at the conference that the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees convened in Geneva during April 1981. Following an agenda crowded with demands for more money, Western governments pledged $560 million, which marked the meeting as a triumph. But the political controls that both start refugee flows and often hamper efforts to bring relief were not discussed; among other African nations, Libya sent a representative only after the assurance that this would be the case. As a gesture of cooperation, Libya nevertheless promised to permit Western aid groups to move unimpeded through Chad, then occupied by Libyan troops. The American delegate's announcement that his government would cut through the dilemma by resettling some 8,000 refugees outside the continent over the next two years was greeted with grim silence, for any departure of people from Africa, however sad their fate, the Organization of African Unity sees as a loss in its potential power.

### Hunger, corruption, and the absent middle class

Those who predict a worldwide shortage of food—either because of the current population or agricultural trends—are both wrong about some of the details and implausible in their general thesis; but most importantly they deflect our attention from the actual social and political causes of hunger in less developed countries. At the current level of agricultural technology more than enough food could be grown for the present world population plus any likely extrapolation over the next century or so, and there is every indication that we are on the threshold of a new breakthrough in food production. This does not mean, however, that we should emulate Dr. Pangloss and proclaim this the best of all possible worlds. The greatest disservice of the doom-sayers is that they have focused our

[10] Perhaps the best data are those compiled in the annual survey of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, 20 West 40th Street, New York, N.Y., 10018.

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attention on relatively tractable technical or ecological problems, to the neglect of root causes.

Food shortages, sometimes deepening into famines, are characteristic only of nonindustrial countries, where well over half of the work force is generally engaged in agriculture. That such countries lack nutrients is due in large part to their socio-political inefficiency rather than solely, or even mainly, to the paucity of advanced technology. Much has been done to improve their agriculture, but hardly anything to mitigate the pervasive effects of bureaucratic control.

The rapid population growth in countries like India and Mexico —and, in a longer perspective, also black Africa where the upsurge is just getting under way—is a very serious problem quite apart from the lack or availability of sufficient food. The flood of unskilled adolescents into the labor market, demanding jobs that do not exist and cannot be conjured up in such quantities, is disrupting economies that under any conditions are usually not very secure. Tremendous new demands are being put on governments now barely able to cope. With greater competition for every good in society, ethnic and national rivalries are becoming sharper; terrorism, insurrections, and wars are more frequent. And because we have concentrated so long on the relation between people and food, we are hardly aware of important underlying causes of this deepening crisis: the weakness or absence of an innovative middle class, and the correlative dominance of grossly inefficient and corrupt governments.

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# Foreign aid: what is at stake?

PETER BAUER & BASIL YAMEY

MR. HOLLIS B. CHENERY, Vice President of the World Bank in charge of economic research, said last year that "Foreign aid is the central component of world development." How can this be so? Large scale development occurs in many places without foreign aid, and did so long before foreign aid was invented.

Official Western aid has now gone to the Third World for about thirty years, more than a human generation. Over this period major deficiencies, even startling anomalies, have become apparent. These untoward results might not matter much if the policy had served to promote the well-being of the peoples of the Third World, but it has not done so. Only exceptionally and in the most propitious circumstances can aid promote or accelerate economic advance, and then merely to a minor extent.

The effects of foreign aid have been quite different. It is foreign aid that has brought into existence the Third World (also

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*Throughout this essay, foreign aid refers to official economic aid. It thus excludes military aid, private investment, and the efforts of private Western charities.*

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called the South). It thus underlies the so-called North-South dialogue or confrontation. *Foreign aid is the source of the North-South conflict, not its solution.* The paramount significance of aid lies in this very important, perhaps momentous, political result.

A further pervasive consequence of aid has been to promote or exacerbate the politicization of life in aid-receiving countries. This major result has gravely damaged the interests of the West and the well-being and prospects of the peoples of Third World countries.

The money spent by the West in no way measures these crucial sequelae of aid. Whatever percentage of their national incomes aid represents, the donor governments cannot wash their hands of the consequences of their so-called caring.

## The creation of "North" and "South"

What is there in common between, say, Thailand and Mozambique, Nepal and Argentina, India and Chad, Tuvalu and Brazil, Mayotte and Nigeria? Public and political discussion nowadays envisages the world as one-third rich—the West—and two-thirds poor or even hungry—the "Third World" or "South." In this picture, extreme poverty is the common feature of the Third World.

This is altogether misleading. There is a continuous range of incomes in the world, both between countries and within them, making the line of division between rich and poor countries quite arbitrary. One could say that the world is two-thirds rich and one-third poor, or one-tenth rich and nine-tenths poor, or choose any other two fractions which add up to one. The size of the celebrated gap between rich countries and poor countries (i.e., the difference in their average incomes) depends on the placement of the arbitrary line of division. The picture is also misleading in that many groups or societies in the Third World—especially in the Far East, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America—are richer than large groups in the West.

Nor is the Third World stagnant. In recent decades many Third World countries have grown rapidly, as for instance have South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Jordan, Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Kenya, and the Ivory Coast. Indeed, in so far as global aggregation and averaging of incomes and growth rates make any sense at all, both total and *per capita* incomes in the Third World as a whole have, since 1950, grown no less fast than in the West, and probably have grown faster.

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It is, of course, hardly sensible to lump together and average incomes of the very different societies of the Third World or South, which comprise some two-thirds of mankind. These societies live in widely different physical and social environments, display radically different attitudes and modes of conduct, and their governments pursue very different policies.

But the diverse components of the Third World do indeed share one characteristic. This is not poverty, stagnation, exploitation, brotherhood, or skin colour; it is the receipt of foreign aid. *The concept of the Third World and the policy of official aid are inseparable. Without foreign aid there is no Third World.* Official aid provides the only bond joining together its diverse and often antagonistic constituents. This has been so ever since practically all of Asia, Africa, and Latin America came to be lumped together in the late 1940's as the underdeveloped world, and thereafter known successively as the less-developed world, the non-aligned world, the developing world, the Third World, and now the South. These expressions never made any sense except in that they denoted a collectivity of aid recipients.

The creation of the Third World has been the most important and far-reaching result of foreign aid. The Third World is moreover a progeny of the West; the foreign aid that created it did not originate in pressure from the Third World, but rather was introduced and organized by the West. It began with President Truman's Point Four Program of 1949. He urged bold measures to help the underdeveloped countries, in which he said that over half of mankind was living in sickness and wretchedness.

Thus by foreign aid did the West create a Third World, and one hostile to itself. Individual Third World countries are often neutral or even friendly to the West, but the organized and articulate Third World is invariably hostile. Its purpose as a collectivity is to coax or extract money from the West. In view of the loss of poise, widespread internal dissension, and feelings of guilt in the West, a hostile stance is appropriate to this purpose.

Foreign aid also gave birth to the notion of the West (or North) as a single economic decision-making entity, as a homogeneous aggregate with identical interests, and as an aggregate capable of imposing its collective will on the Third World. In fact, Western governments do not collude over selling or buying prices. Numerous foreign suppliers compete freely and often fiercely for business in Third World markets. Obvious competitors include, for example, construction companies, engineering consultants, and suppliers of

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manufactured products such as motor cars, trucks, and chemical products. Manufacturers and commodity traders also compete in the purchase of exports from the Third World.

Thus it is foreign aid which has created two fictions: first, that of the Third World as a substantially uniform collectivity with common interests; and second, that of the West as another substantially uniform collectivity, a powerful decision-making unit or homogeneous aggregate manipulating the world economy to the common advantage of its constituents. These fictions have in turn resulted in the reality of the "North-South" dialogue, confrontation, or conflict. References to the modest proportion of the national income of the donors that foreign aid represents obscure these far-reaching political results.

## Anomalies of aid

Foreign aid is the transfer of taxpayers' money to distant governments and to official international organizations. The use of the term "aid" to describe these tranfers preempts criticism, obscures issues, and prejudges results.

Who could be against aid to the less fortunate? Aid is good, more aid is better. When aid advocates talk of the disappointing record of aid, they mean not that aid has been ineffective or damaging, but that the amounts of aid have been insufficient. The term aid has enabled supporters of intergovernmental transfers to claim a monopoly on compassion, and to dismiss critics as bigoted or lacking in humanity.

The prevailing uncritical—indeed axiomatic—approach to these official wealth transfers has allowed startling and often bizarre anomalies to flourish.

According to the latest available official information (April 1981), Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Vietnam, Cuba, and South Yemen all received official Western aid every year from 1977 to 1979. This was at a time when the surpluses of the OPEC countries were widely regarded as embarrassing or as damaging to Western economies, when the government of Vietnam openly persecuted millions of people, and when Cuba dispatched troops to Africa, again to the embarrassment of the West. The survivors among the large numbers of refugees from the Vietnamese government during this period descended on other aid-recipient countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Their arrival inflicted substantial costs on these governments and pro-

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duced much political tension and conflict. Again, in April 1981, the Secretary General of the United Nations announced special aid of $560 million for African refugees when almost all of these people have fled from governments which continue to receive Western aid.

Substantial Western aid has gone and still goes to governments at war with each other; to governments severely restricting the inflow of capital, the shortage of which is said to be the ground for aid; to governments spending lavishly on obvious prestige projects; and to governments pursuing other policies which retard economic advance and harm the interests of their poorest citizens.

Another anomaly occurs when aid provides for the expansion of output of a product in the recipient country at a time when the donor government is grappling with excess capacity at home, with the resulting unemployment in the industry affected. (U.K. aid to expand steel production in Morocco is a current example.)

## Aid and economic growth

Although the case for official transfers is largely taken for granted, various arguments or rationalizations are often advanced. These are addressed primarily to audiences not yet firmly committed.

The central argument for foreign aid has remained that without it Third World countries cannot progress at a reasonable rate, or cannot progress at all. But not only is foreign aid patently not required for development, it is, in actual fact, much more likely to obstruct it than to promote it.

It diminishes the people of the Third World to suggest that, although they crave material progress, unlike the West they cannot achieve it without external doles. Of course, large parts of the Third World made rapid progress long before foreign aid—witness Southeast Asia, West Africa, and Latin America. The emergence of hundreds of millions of people, both in the South and in the West, from poverty to prosperity has not depended on external gifts. Economic achievement has depended, as it still does depend, on people's own faculties, motivations, and ways of life, on their institutions and on the policies of their rulers. In short, economic achievement depends on the conduct of people, including governments. External donations have never been necessary for the development of any country, anywhere. There are, of course, a number of Third World countries or societies which have not progressed much in the postwar period. This lack of progress reflects factors which cannot be overcome by aid, and are indeed likely to be reinforced by it.

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Governments or businesses in the Third World that can use capital productively can borrow at home and abroad.[1] This is also true for governments borrowing to spend on the so-called infrastructure, i.e., on facilities which do not yield a directly appropriable return. If spending on infrastructure is productive, it increases taxable capacity so that the governments can readily service the borrowed capital. It follows that the absolute maximum contribution of foreign aid to development, in the sense of the growth of the national income, is the avoided cost of borrowing, i.e., interest and amortization. As a percentage of the national income for large Third World countries, this maximum contribution is at best minute, and is far too small to register in the national income statistics. For India in recent years, the contribution of aid would have been at best on the order of one-quarter to one-half of 1 percent of recorded gross domestic product.

The maximum benefit from foreign aid is thus a modest reduction in the cost of investible funds—a resource which is *not* a major independent factor in economic development. It is evident on reflection that the volume of investible funds is not a critical determinant of economic progress, for, if it were, countless poor individuals and societies could not have advanced rapidly in a very short period, as they have done both in the West and in the Third World. The relative unimportance to material progress of the volume of investible funds has been confirmed by much recent research, including that of Simon Kuznets, Edward Denison, Moses Abramovitz, and Sir Alec Cairncross.[2] It is economic achievement that produces assets and money; it is not assets and money which produce economic achievement.

However, suppose that, contrary to the results of reflection and observation, the volume of investible funds was a critical determinant of economic advance. If it were, then those actions of many

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[1] Where the political survival of a newly-created country is widely doubted, it may not be able to raise capital even if it can use capital productively. These apparent exceptions to the rule that development does not depend upon external aid are plainly irrelevant to the case for global transfers to the Third World.

[2] According to Kuznets, the contribution of the increases in material capital (both reproducible and non-reproducible) to the increase of per-capita income over long periods in major developed countries was limited, "ranging from less than a seventh to not much more than a fifth" (S. Kuznets, *Postwar Economic Growth,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 41). Much more important were improved efficiency in the use of resources and the movement of resources from less productive to more productive sectors. See also P. T. Bauer, *Dissent on Development* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), ch. 2, and *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion* (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), ch. 14.

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Third World governments which restrict the inflow of foreign private capital—a course of action made easier by receipts of aid—would be evidence that these governments gave a low priority to economic development. The same applies also to the practice of several governments, including those of India and Nigeria, of in effect passing on to other governments part of the aid they themselves receive.

Any benefit from the reduction of the cost of investible funds is likely to be small. It is also likely to be much more than offset by the adverse repercussions of official aid. And these repercussions are brought about by amounts of aid which, while small in relation to the national income of recipient countries, are nevertheless often a *significant* part of their government revenues and of foreign exchange receipts. These are the relevant magnitudes in assessing the principal repercussions of these transfers, because aid goes to governments and it increases both the revenues and the external balances at their direct disposal. In India, for instance, the latest official statistics available show that aid receipts in 1978 were of the order of 1.25 percent of officially calculated gross national product—but were about one-fifth of the country's export earnings. The figure of the government's tax receipts in 1978 is not available to us, but in the mid 1970's aid was of the order of one-fifth of its tax revenues. Thus, according to the latest official statistics, foreign aid to India as a proportion both of export earnings and of tax revenues was about thirteen times as significant as it was as a percentage of recorded gross domestic product.

## How aid can inhibit development

The adverse repercussions of official aid operate precisely on the personal, social, and political factors which determine economic development.

Most importantly, aid increases the money, patronage, and power of the recipient governments, and thereby their grip over the rest of society. It thus promotes the disastrous politicization of life in the Third World (a subject to which we shall return). When social and economic life is extensively politicized, people's livelihood or even their economic and physical survival comes to depend on political and administrative decisions. This result promotes conflict, especially in the multiracial societies of most Third World countries. This sequence diverts energy and attention from productive activity to the political arena; and the direction of people's activities is necessarily a crucial determinant of economic performance.

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There are further untoward implications and repercussions of foreign aid which are far from trivial. Aid enables governments to pursue policies which patently retard growth and exacerbate poverty, and there is a long list of such policies. These include persecution of the most productive groups, especially minorities, and sometimes also their expulsion; restraints on the activities of traders and even the destruction of the trading system; restriction on the inflow of foreign capital, enterprise, and skills; voluntary or compulsory purchase of foreign enterprises (which deprives the country of skills very helpful to development, besides absorbing scarce capital); forced collectivization; price policies which discourage food production; and, generally, the imposition of economic controls which restrict external contacts and domestic mobility, and so retard the spread of new ideas and methods.

Aid also is apt to bias development policy towards unsuitable external models. Familiar examples include steel and petrochemical complexes and official airlines. Moreover, in some instances the adoption of external prototypes has gone hand in hand with attempts at more comprehensive modernization, including attempted transformation of people's mores, values, and institutions. Such policies can have dangerous, even explosive, consequences (as in Iran).

Aid also impairs the international competitiveness of economic activities in the recipient countries by helping to create or maintain overvalued exchange rates or to increase the domestic money supply.[3] (These adverse effects could be offset if the transfers greatly enhanced the productivity of resources, but this is extremely improbable.) Foreign aid also makes it easier for governments to pursue imprudent financial policies. Unless aid is increasingly forthcoming, these policies lead to disruptive domestic inflation and to balance of payments difficulties, which in turn are apt to engender a crisis atmosphere and a flight of capital. This sequence encourages the imposition of specific controls, with adverse economic, social, and political results.

It would be naive to suppose that adverse policies would cease in the absence of aid. What is pertinent is that aid makes it easier to pursue and continue these policies. This is the case because, while it does little or nothing to promote development, aid can relieve immediate shortages, especially of consumer goods and of imports. This makes it easier for governments to conceal temporarily from their populations the worst effects of the damaging policies.

[3] This effect of aid is discussed in Hans O. Schmitt's "Development Assistance: A View from Bretton Woods," *Public Policy*, Fall 1973.

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## Between aid and the poor: Third World rulers

Foreign aid does not go to the pitiable figures we see on aid posters or in aid advertisements—it goes to their rulers. The policies of these rulers who receive aid are sometimes directly responsible for conditions such as those depicted. This is notably so in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia. But even where this is not so the policies of the rulers, including their patterns of public spending, are determined by their own personal and political interests, among which the position of the poorest has very low priority.[4] Indeed, to support rulers on the basis of the poverty of their subjects does nothing to discourage policies that lead to impoverishment. Many Third World governments have persecuted and even expelled the most productive groups, such as the Chinese in Vietnam and Indonesia, or the Asians in East Africa. On the criterion of poverty, such governments then qualify for more aid, because incomes in their countries have been reduced.

These anomalies or paradoxes are obscured when it is suggested that giving money to the rulers of poor countries is the same as giving it to poor, even destitute people. Giving money to governments is certainly not the same thing as helping the poor. On the contrary: Western aid to Third World governments, especially in Asia and Africa, has extensively supported disastrous economic policies, which have greatly aggravated the lot of the poorest. Dr. Nyerere of Tanzania has for many years been a much favored aid recipient. Apart from large-scale collectivization of farming, his government has forcibly moved millions of people into so-called socialist villages, often far from their homes. These policies have had devastating effects on food production. President Mobutu of Zaire, another recipient of extensive aid, has expelled large numbers of traders. This had led to enforced reversion to subsistence production over large areas, causing much hardship and deprivation. As is well known, the economic performance of these two countries compares dismally with that of Kenya and the Ivory Coast, where such extreme policies have been avoided.[5]

We may also note some less extreme instances. Lavish spending

[4] This political reality has been recognized by others. Governments "genuinely committed to improving the material standards of life of the mass of their population" are "rare in the Third World." C.H. Kirkpatrick and F.I. Nixson, "The North-South Debate: Reflections on the Brandt Commission Report," *Three Banks Review* (London, September 1981), p. 39.

[5] The economic policies and achievements of Kenya and Tanzania, and also official Western attitudes to these countries, are compared briefly in Gunter Krabbe, "East Africa and Double Standards," *Encounter*, October 1981.

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on show projects by aid receiving governments is familiar thoughout the Third World. How do the poorest benefit from the creation at vast expense of brand new capitals such as Brasilia, Islamabad, Abuja in Nigeria,[6] Lilongwe in Malawi, or Dodoma in Tanzania?[7] Or from international airlines established throughout the Third World, in countries including such as Burundi and Laos, where the vast majority of people do not use these airlines and local people cannot operate them? It does not help the poorest in Tanzania or Ghana that these countries have international airlines with elegant offices in the West End of London and midtown Manhattan. Many of these projects and enterprises, facilitated by the flow of foreign aid, represent a drain on domestic resources and have to be subsidized by local taxpayers. These are but a few examples of the radical differences between foreign aid rhetoric and Third World reality.

Would it be possible for the donor countries to help the poor either by influencing the policies of the aid recipient governments or by giving aid directly to the poorest instead of to their rulers? Neither course is practicable, as such attempts would be resisted and sabotaged by the governments. Both Western charities and official aid organizations already encounter difficulties in some countries. But in situations where it might be practicable to give official aid directly to the poorest, other problems would arise, many of them well-nigh intractable.

The most obvious of these problems is the pauperization and de-skilling of the recipients. In the Third World very large numbers of the poorest are materially unambitious. Official donations from abroad may serve to turn these poor into paupers, so that these handouts may have to be continued indefinitely. Whole societies can thus be pauperized. A recent example, which is informative

[6] The decision to build a new capital from scratch in the center of the country was political, not economic or social. Instead of unifying the peoples of Nigeria as some of its proponents hoped, the project has already proved to be highly divisive. Critics complain that $9 billion has been spent to date "and that much of this has vanished without producing visible results"; as yet "the new capital exists only on paper." (*The Economist*, 3-9 October 1981, p. 56). More rebudgeted for Abuja. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 September, 1981).

[7] An officer of the government agency in charge of "transforming Dodoma from a semi-arid railway crossroads to an elegantly planned headquarters for the nation" said recently: "I believe Dodoma is rapidly approaching a crisis. It will have to be abandoned or else saved by a major international rescue operation." An Australian aid official, who serves as information director and business manager for the new capital, is reported as saying: "Even if the project were given more money, I doubt whether it could all be spent. We cannot get enough cement, enough steel, enough diesel to run the trucks. But it is not only a question of financial resources and building materials, the country basically does not have enough skilled people to properly run the place." (*The Times* (London), 23 December 1981).

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although extreme, is the large-scale pauperization in the U.S. trust territory of Micronesia. Large numbers of people there have abandoned productive activity, such as agriculture and fishing, because they can live not too uncomfortably on the handouts of the U.S. administration. The results have amounted to a form of dis-development, the de-skilling of people. The outcome of pauperization is persistent poverty, which in turn serves as a rationalization for further aid.

Many people think that world-wide redistribution from rich to poor through foreign aid is a natural extension of domestic redistribution through progressive taxation. But international transfers effected by foreign aid differ radically from internal transfers effected by progressive taxation (whatever the case for the latter). Aid goes from government to government. Unlike progressive taxation, aid transfers are in no way adjusted to the personal circumstances of taxpayers and recipients. Many taxpayers in donor countries are far poorer than many people in recipient countries, in which aid largely benefits the powerful and the relatively well-off rather than the poor.

Redistributive taxation postulates basic similarities of conditions, and therefore of requirements, within its area of operation. Globally, these requirements differ widely. The meaning of riches and poverty depends crucially on people's requirements, and thus on physical and social living conditions. This is obvious for physical conditions, notably climate. But it applies also to social conditions, including customs and values.

Unlike progressive taxation within a country, global redistribution relies on international income comparisons. These are subject to very large biases and errors. They greatly understate the relative incomes of large Asian and African countries compared to the West. According to World Bank estimates, the official figure of the national income of India has to be raised by a factor of more than three to make it comparable to that of the United States. Other scholarly studies have found much larger biases and errors. These arise for such reasons as the use in these comparisons of official exchange rates instead of purchasing power parities; underestimation (or complete disregard) of much subsistence production; and the neglect of differences in age composition between the West and the Third World. (Such considerations, incidentally, also help to put into perspective statistics on Third World incomes and changes in incomes which purport to be accurate to within fractions of 1 percent.)

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## Failed analogies and justifications

The success of the Marshall Plan in the early postwar years is frequently invoked in support of wealth transfers to the Third World. This analogy fails completely. In postwar Europe the task was not development but reconstruction. The European peoples' faculties, institutions, and political arrangements were appropriate to sustained prosperity, as was evident from pre-war experience. This is why Marshall aid could be terminated in four years and why West Germany could become an exporter of capital soon afterwards. This should be contrasted with suggestions that official aid to the Third World will have to continue for a long time, at least into the 21st century.

That suggestion—that aid will have to be continued as far ahead as the 21st century—is paradoxical. Aid for development has been canvassed on the grounds that it is necessary to make Third World countries less dependent on the West. As aid cannot contribute substantially to development, the matter is misconceived. Worse still, aid has made it possible for governments to pursue policies such as subsidized import substitution, forced collectivization, inappropriate agricultural price policies, and inflationary financial policies, all of which have not only damaged the interests of the local people but have also increased the demand for imports, and simultaneously decreased the ability to pay for them. Thus a number of these counties—such as, for instance, Tanzania—have become more, rather than less, dependent on the West and its largesse.

There are several further defenses of extensive aid, each of which is highly questionable. Foreign aid is often advocated as helpful or even necessary for Western prosperity. It is claimed that aid increases purchasing power and advances growth in the Third World, and thereby promotes exports and employment in the West. This is an argument most often addressed to businessmen and trade unionists.

The claim is invalid. It would be invalid even if the transfers significantly promoted development in the Third World (which, however, they cannot do). Exports bought with the proceeds of foreign aid are given away. It is sophistry to say that people who give away part of their wealth must be better off because those whom they have helped are better off or will be better off. A shopkeeper does not prosper by giving away his cash to people, some of whom may later spend part of it in his shop.

It is sophistry also to say that large-scale aid to the Third World

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will alleviate unemployment, recession, and de-industrialization in the West. If it were really possible to cure or relieve unemployment or recession by more government spending, this could be done more effectively by Western countries at home, for example, by spending on the modernization of industry and the improvement of the infrastructure, or on industrial or regional subsidies, defense, social services, or personal subsidies. In short, the idea that aid helps the economies of the donors simply ignores the cost of the resources given away.

A political argument favored especially in the United States is that without large-scale aid the Third World will drift into the Soviet camp. This argument is again insubstantial.

To begin with, about one-third of all Western aid is channelled through official international agencies. In the allocation of aid they are not permitted to take into account the political interests of donors. Moreover, the Soviet Union is represented in the United Nations. It can thus affect the direction of substantial multilateral transfers under the United Nations programs, though its own financial contribution is negligible. Indeed, practically the entire Soviet non-military aid is channelled to client-states, notably Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, South Yemen, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, most of which have also received aid from the West.

Western political interests are also largely ignored in direct government to government aid (oddly and misleadingly termed bilateral aid). Aid administrators are qualified neither by training nor, often, by inclination to act as promoters of Western political interests. Much aid is given regardless of the political conduct of the recipients or of their political and military significance. Official transfers have also often helped to bring to the fore governments hostile to the market system, and sympathetic to Soviet ideology. This is so because aid goes to governments and, as already noted, tends to politicize life in the Third World. This effect is reinforced by the preference of many influential aid advocates and aid administrators for governments that claim to run "planned economies."

Since the earliest days of aid many of its recipients have been vocal in their opposition to the Western donors, denigrating and thwarting them as best they could. Examples range from Nkrumah in the 1950s to Qaddafi, Nyerere and Mengistu at present. Many governments which derive their aid from the West derive their ideology from the East. Moreover, as noted already, the Third World acting as an articulate collectivity is hostile to the West.

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## Aid and restitution

Many people, especially in the Third World but also in the West, think of aid as restitution or partial restitution for past wrongs. But what are these supposed wrongs? Contact with the West has been the prime agent of material progress in the Third World. Material achievement in the less-developed world diminishes as one moves away from the foci of Western impact. The poorest and most backward are the populations with few or no external contacts, the aborigines being the limiting case. To say that commercial contacts damage the Third World is to suggest that people in the Third World do not know what they are doing or what is good for them when they buy from the West, or when they produce for export.

The widely canvassed notion that the prosperity of the West has been achieved at the expense of the Third World is a variant of the familiar misconception that incomes of prosperous people have been extracted from the less well off. In fact, normally incomes are earned—that is, produced by the recipients. Moreover, the notion spills over into domestic discussion in the Third World. It inspires sentiments and policies directed against economically productive but politically unpopular and ineffective groups. The resulting policies inflict hardship on the immediate victims and also harm the economic position and prospects of the population at large, including the poorest people.

The most familiar specific arguments in support of aid as compensation or restitution are unfounded.

Those who think that the West manipulates prices to the detriment of the Third World misconceive market operations. Prices in international markets are the outcome of numerous individual transactions and decisions. They are not set by an organization called "the West." (If they were imposed by the West, why are Third World export prices ever allowed to rise in real terms?) In any case, even if the terms of trade with the South were unfavorable according to some criterion or other, this would mean only that the South had not benefited as much from the contacts with the West as it would have had prices been more favorable. The peoples of the South are certainly better off than if they had no trade the South had not benefited as much from its contacts with the West of most Third World countries in recent decades have been unusually favorable. The overall external purchasing power of these countries' exports over Western goods has been far greater than ever before.

And what about colonialism? The majority of Western aid

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donors, including the United States which is by far the largest donor, never had colonies of any significance. Some of them, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, were themselves British colonies. And whatever its objectionable features, 19th and 20th century colonialism—which is what is meant by colonialism in this context—was of great economic benefit to the peoples of these countries. For instance, Ethiopia and Liberia, which were not colonies, are among the most backward countries in Africa. Much the same is true in Asia—witness Bhutan, Sikkim, Tibet, and Nepal. Incidentally, multinational corporations, the alleged instruments of neo-colonialism, do not operate in the most backward countries nor in the most backward areas of better-off Third World countries.

According to UNCTAD General Principle XIV, passed by an overwhelming majority of UNCTAD in 1964, colonialism is incompatible with material progress. This was declaimed at a time when Hong Kong, the last remaining sizeable Western colony in the Far East, was progressing so rapidly that Western countries were imposing controls on imports from it to protect their domestic industries. The idea that colonial status precludes material progress is refuted by obvious evidence from all over the world.

What about the Atlantic slave trade? Most Western countries were not involved in it at all. Asian countries, the largest foreign aid recipients, were unaffected. And, horrible and destructive as this trade was, it was not a cause of African backwardness. The region most affected by it, namely West Africa, is the most advanced part of black Africa. (Incidentally, the Arab slave trade, which began before Atlantic slavery and far outlasted it, was even more horrible and was stopped by Western efforts. But the Arab slave trade is practically never mentioned in this context.)

The claim that aid is a form of restitution for alleged wrongs opens the door to unlimited blackmail and unlimited transfers. Transfers motivated by guilt feelings are likely to be undiscriminating. People afflicted with guilt feelings are concerned with their own emotional state and perhaps with that of their fellow citizens, rather than with what happens to people at the receiving end of the policies inspired by this sentiment. They are apt to be altogether intensitive or indifferent to the consequences of aid.

## Reshaping aid policy

Foreign aid cannot achieve its declared objectives and has far-reaching damaging political and economic results. Yet it will not

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be terminated promptly because of existing commitments and because of the vested interests behind it both in the government and the market sectors, in the donor as well as in the recipient countries. Can the worst effects of aid be mitigated by changes in its methods of operation?

To begin with, it may help a little if aid were to take forms which made it possible to identify its costs and possibly its benefits. This rules out indirect methods of aid such as commodity agreements. Not only are their results perverse, but their overall impact cannot be assessed. And such schemes are not subject to any form of public budgetary control.

There may be some advantage in avoiding soft loans in favour of outright grants. The latter avoid problems of measurement and of the confusion between gifts and loans.[8] Aid should also take the form of direct grants from donor government to recipient government rather than of payments to multilateral organizations to be allocated by them to the ultimate recipients. Such direct grants permit a modicum of control by the elected representatives of the taxpayers in the donor countries, i.e., the real donors. The more distant the relationship between the supplier of funds and their user, the more likely that they will be used ineffectively. Attempts to extend the multilateral component of aid should be resisted; so also should attempts be resisted to make aid more automatic by the introduction of international taxation, as proposed for instance in the recent Brandt report.[9]

But these proposed reforms would make little difference in practice unless the granting of aid were made deliberately discriminating. Aid would have to be concentrated carefully on governments whose domestic and external policies were most likely to promote the general welfare of their peoples, and notably their economic progress. Aid would have to go to governments which tried to achieve this end by effective administration, the performance of the essential tasks of government, and the pursuit of liberal economic policies. At present, many aid recipient governments neglect even such basic tasks as maintaining public security, while nevertheless trying to run closely controlled economies. Selective alloca-

[8] In 1979 the official development assistance given by aid-giving OECD countries included loans which on average had a grant element of 61 percent (an average which corresponds to a loan at 3 percent with a grace period of 10 years and a maturity of 40 years). In the same year the grant element in grants and loans combined came to 90 percent (*Development Co-operation: 1980 Review*, Paris, 1980, p. 103).

[9] *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, London, 1980, pp. 290-1.

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tion of aid along these lines would reduce its propensity to politicize life, and thereby it would reduce the extent and intensity of political conflict. It would also promote prosperity in the recipient countries, to the limited extent that external donations can do so.

Relief of need, especially humanitarian relief of poverty in the Third World, should be left to voluntary agencies, notably to nonpoliticized charities. They are already active in this field. They could do much more if it were recognized that relief of need belongs to their sphere. In this realm the international comity among countries calls for official aid only to meet unforeseeable and exceptional disasters.

As for economic development, the West can best promote this by reduction of its often severe barriers to imports from poor countries. External commerce is an effective stimulus to economic progress. It is commercial intercourse with the West which has transformed economic life in the Far East, Southeast Asia, part of Africa, and Latin America.

However, even removal of trade restrictions may well do little for the economic advance of some Third World countries and groups. Where the enlargement of external opportunities would not bring about the economic advance of particular societies, external donations to their governments would be even less likely to do so.

## The central question

We have had to examine a variety of issues in this essay, including many which are staples in the public and academic discussion of foreign aid. The extended nature of this examination should not be allowed to obscure what we regard as the central and most significant result of foreign aid. This result has been the establishment of the Third World as a collectivity, and one which as a collectivity as generally hostile to the West.

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# Christo in Central Park—and in Harlem

NATHAN GLAZER

THE artist Christo (sculptor? happenings director? temporary environments creator?) has proposed for New York's Central Park what is undoubtedly his largest project to date: "The Gates," which is to be the embellishment of 27 miles of walkway with simple rectangular archways from which fabric curtains will hang. Christo, as is well known, is not content to confine his art to studios, or indeed to any indoor space, nor does he create permanent, free-standing objects for the outdoors. He first became known for wrapping very large objects so that they looked like packages. Thus, he wrapped the Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland (1968) in 27,000 square feet of reinforced polyethylene and nylon rope (when a package rises to a giant scale, the packaging materials must be adapted accordingly). He went on to wrap—though the term "wrap" hardly seems appropriate to the ungainly result—a section of cliffs on the coast of Australia in a million square feet of material (1969). An enormous curtain was then hung across a valley in Colorado (200,000 square feet of nylon polyamide, 110,000 pounds of steel cable, 800 tons of concrete) in the early 1970's. And, in perhaps his biggest project to date, a running fence of fabric 24 miles long and 18 feet high was strung across the peninsula of Marin Country, California (1972-76). In the project that most closely resembles the one proposed for Central Park—though on a much more modest scale—a few miles of walkways in Loose Park, Kansas City, were carpeted loosely with 15,000 square feet of fabric.

These wrappings and constructions do not last long. While the Marin County "Running Fence" project is pictured on postcards dating it as 1972-76, that represents not the time taken to design and build it, nor the period during which it stood, but the time taken to get the necessary permissions.

Christo does not always succeed in getting these permissions: Proposals to wrap the Pont Neuf in Paris and the Reichstag in Berlin remain in the project stage, but Rome has been more pliant, and the Porta Pinciana was successfully wrapped in 1974.

While Christo has wrapped buildings and monuments in cities, and wrapped or marked large sections of landscape, he has never

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proposed a project of the scale of The Gates for a city. It would involve constructing 10,000 to 15,000 gates, rectangular steel structures 15 feet high, 9½ feet wide, of 2½ inch pipe, from which would loosely hang 9½ foot fabric curtains, leaving openings 5½ feet high through which people could walk. No less than 27 miles of park walkways would be so treated. The effect is presented in drawings in which one sees the curtains being lifted by a gentle breeze so they stretch out at an angle of roughly 45 degrees, curtain upon curtain upon curtain, as far as the eye can see. The cost is estimated at $6 million and the proposal is to erect them for a two-week period in the fall of one of the four years between 1982 and 1986.

It is not often that a public official is confronted with such a proposition, and Gordon J. Davis, the New York City Parks Commissioner, took almost a year before deciding against the project in February 1981. But Christo is no simple artist propounding visionary schemes: He had retained the well known and well connected New York City lawyer Theodore W. Kheel and, of most immediate interest, had already enlisted the resources of social science, too. Kheel assured the Parks Commissioner that Christo would be responsible for all costs involved in constructing and taking down The Gates (how does an artist raise $6,000,000 for such a project, one wonders?). In addition, Christo and his wife commissioned a study, for $50,000, of the "human impact" of The Gates. The study, which has just been released, was conducted by the firm of the well known social psychologist Kenneth Clark (Clark, Phipps, Clark, and Harris—CPC&H).[1] Armed with the Clark study, and an additional study of the environmental impact of the project, Christo hopes to return and make a new application for permission to build The Gates. The story is not over.

But "gating" Central Park, which sits squarely in the middle of Manhattan and which is the first large and most heavily used urban park in the United States, will be no simple matter. Central Park was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Calvert Vaux in 1859. Olmsted was for decades a giant figure in shaping the American city, and our respect for him grows daily as we see how badly we, his successors, have done with the great heritage of parks and parkways he left us in New York, Boston, Chicago, Buffalo, and other cities in which he worked. The growing respect for Olmsted is only one of the obstacles that the Christo project must face. Indeed, the four years it took to overcome suburban and exurban skepticism to build "Running Fence" will seem modest compared to what may be required to get permission—if it ever comes—to put up The Gates. For in addition to those passionately committed to defending what Olmsted left behind, and who will certainly view such a massive even if temporary reshaping of the park critically,

[1] *Christo: The "Gates" Project for Central Park—Human Impact Study* (New York: Clark, Phipps, Clark, and Harris, January 1982).

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one must take account of the social ecology of Central Park. Central Park is like "Dead End"—that stark meeting place of the dwellings of the rich and poor of New York which is the scene for Sidney Kingsley's play—on a giant scale. The park is bordered on the east, south, and west by high apartment buildings, and some luxury hotels. The rich and very well-to-do of New York live on Fifth Avenue, Central Park South, and Central Park West. On the east and west sides of the elongated park are the two major museums of New York City, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Natural History, with attendant lesser museums and institutions—the New York Historical Society on the west, the Frick Collection, the Guggenheim Museum, the Cooper-Hewitt, the Jewish Museum, the Museum of the City of New York, and others on the east.

But the elegance of south, east, and west ends abruptly as one reaches the far northern sections of the Park. On the northeast is Spanish Harlem, on the north Harlem, on the northwest once grand apartment houses which have for a long time shown signs of neglect and decay. The magnificent view of a great park in the middle of one of the most densely built cities in the world does nothing, surprisingly enough, for the minority areas that ring the park on the north: They might as well be located in the South Bronx.

Thus immediately surrounding the park are three constituencies that must be brought to accept The Gates: The rich and well-to-do occupy perhaps seven-tenths of the park frontage, minorities about a fifth, the cultural institutions that may be taken to represent Olmsted and his heritage the rest. But in the politics of New York City, Christo and his knowledgeable advisor Theodore Kheel thought it best to concentrate, in the human impact study, on minorities.

If one asks what social science can contribute to decisions on public art, it would appear that in New York City one answer is to demonstrate that minorities are not against it; even better, that minorities are for it. The report tells us that the working hypothesis for the human impact study was that "[t]he creation of 'The Gates' throughout the length of Central Park from north to south would be an important unifying artistic event which would not only provide beauty and joy for all the people of the City, but would be a real and symbolic opportunity of bringing different.... New Yorkers together." The study would determine "the extent to which these beliefs are or are not shared by ... minorities." It was, interestingly enough, Commissioner Davis himself—the son of the well known black sociologist, Allison Davis, for many years on the faculty of the University of Chicago—who suggested that the study not be limited to the minorities who abut the northern reaches of the park, and who pointed out that at least 40 percent of the people who use the park do not live near it. The study was extended to cover non-minorities.

We now have the results of 660 interviews, 360 of which are face-to-face interviews conducted with people in and around Central

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Park, 300 of which are telephone interviews. Some questions dealt with the use of the park, some with the Christo project and how respondents felt about it. One key question was whether the northern part of the park had its fair share of cultural and aesthetic facilities. Nearly half the sample "agreed that there is a noticeable cultural difference between the northern and southern ends of the park." More of the blacks, fewer of the whites, were aware of such an imbalance. The implication is that more should be done for the northern end of the park, though the report does point out that the terrain is hillier, rockier, and generally wilder in the north. Christo's project would of course cover the entire park.

We incidentally learn some other things about attitudes to the park: 37 percent saw as the most disturbing feature of the park crime, 33 percent physical deterioration. The statistics on response to perception of crime are odd. Nearly half of all the respondents over 50 years old never go into the park alone, two-thirds of the Hispanics say they never go into the park alone, and only 8 percent of the blacks say they never go into the park alone. The report suggests that high percentage of Hispanics who never go into the park alone is explained by the fact they live around the northern end of the park. But the low black percentage?

THE key questions deal with what people think of The Gates. Those who were interviewed face-to-face were shown a picture of The Gates, those interviewed on the telephone had it described to them. A huge majority—72 percent—were positive, the rest were either negative or unsure. Those who saw the picture of The Gates and those interviewed on the phone surprisingly showed identical percentages of approval. Indeed, only 17 percent of those reached on the phone refused to commit themselves. Black and Hispanics approved more than whites, who still gave a majority approval of 57 percent.

Younger people approved more than older people. Three out of four blacks and Hispanics agreed that The Gates would bring together different groups of New Yorkers; fewer whites—56 percent—thought so. Most of the sample did not think The Gates would present problems for the elderly or for children. Almost 9 out of 10 agreed vandalism would be a problem. The interviewers proposed two alternatives for reducing vandalism—security guards riding through the park on scooters, or community involvement; the example suggested was hiring young people to guard the project. On this, the interviewees split half and half, which the informed New Yorker will interpret as uniform resignation in the face of all proposed alternatives, rather than divided enthusiasm.

Commissioner Davis also used a survey of public opinion—much more modest than the Clark survey—in turning down Christo's request. A private citizen, it seems, surveyed people on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum on two days and found 129 against, 22 in favor, and 13 in favor if the project were scaled down. Undoubt-

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edly those who congregate on the steps of the Metropolitan are a different sample from those interviewed by CPC&H. It would have helped in resolving this discrepancy if the Clark results had been broken down by income and education, but this was not done, even though the survey did have questions on income and education. Presumably ethnicity may stand for income and education, and the higher vote approving the project by blacks and Hispanics may be taken to mean that lower numbers of the educated and those of high income approved it.

What is most intriguing in these bare results—and, as in most surveys, they are bare indeed—is *why* the Christo project got such high support. It is hardly likely that many of the respondents would have heard of it. Indeed, one of the most interesting questions that could have been asked, was not: "Have you heard of the Christo project?" with the appropriate follow-ups to separate those who knew what it was from those who didn't. (Another interesting question would have been, "Are you more than 5½ feet tall?")

Why do such high proportions of minorities, and presumably those of less education and lower income, support it? It is hard to discern anything in the report that helps answer such a question, though it is clear from the way the report is structured what CPC&H would like us to believe: It is because minorities are aware that "cultural and artistic activities and facilities" are concentrated at the southern end of the park, and want to redress the balance. Three-fifths of the blacks noted such an imbalance, one-half of the Hispanics, but only one third of the whites. Conceivably, alerted to this difference, respondents were ready to support a cultural event that would extend, as the question puts it, from 59th to 110th Street, rather than be placed, as most are, in the southern half. Yet this is hardly enough to explain the overwhelming minority support for an enterprise that would seem to be, on the surface, little related to the dominant cultural interests and experiences of New York's minority groups.

CLEARLY Christo has been able to score one for his ambitious enterprise. And his cultivation of minority support does not end with the Clark survey; Christo hopes to provide work for youths in the community, in leased quarters on 110th Street, for construction and installation of The Gates.

The next stage in Christo's campaign must be directed toward the middle and upper-middle classes who still remain more skeptical: Perhaps the environmental impact statement—Christo has already consulted an ornithologist and an arborist—will bring them around. One can still imagine bird-lovers worried about those 15,000 flapping curtains, ecologists concerned about 30,000 holes on walkways for 15 foot, 2½ inch, steel pipes. One recalls what is left behind when a traffic meter is uprooted.

But there is still the third interest, the defenders of the park and the interpreters of its role in New York City. Does the park need a Christo project? Even if it does not need it, is this the kind of

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happening that should take place in it? And should one object, if Christo pays for it, and a lot of people think it would be fun?

For these questions, social science and straw votes on the project, whether or not samples are properly drawn and questions properly phrased, matter little. We are plunged, as with all cases of public art, into a mix of considerations, none of which can be measured by the same yardstick as another. There are issues of equity. Where should public art go, and which community shall be favored (if the art can be considered as favoring anyone)? What is its impact on the environment? Is this where we want to draw people? Will this object be safe where we intend to place it? Can it survive use? What are we celebrating, and is this an appropriate way to do it? All these, one suspects, can still be settled by the messy processes of public decision making, and they will play a part in the ultimate disposition of Christo's proposal. But after all these (and undoubtedly others), there are also questions of aesthetics. Should this thing be done in this place? The public properly claims a role in this decision, and so popular taste vies with an educated taste—sophisticated, learned, or informed—in entering into the decision. We have been given one popular vote in favor, perhaps a somewhat more informed vote (if those on the steps of the Metropolitan are to be taken for the aesthetically more informed) against. But there is no escaping aesthetic judgments, which are not made by vote.

And so I will hazard one. The project, as presented in pictures, has a certain charm. Indeed, it shows some improvement from the rather pointless wrapping of Australian cliffs, or the equally pointless carpeting in loose fabric of the footpaths of Loose Park, with its clear danger of catching heels, and pitching park-users, especially the older ones, head over heels. There is, too, a certain childish pleasure in the notion of something going on and on far beyond any rational need for it. In this respect, it reminds one of the other Christo projects and their characteristic excess. But the effect, I think, could be gotten just as well from the drawings and collages on photographs which show what a setting would be like if something like this were done as in doing it in reality. Just as Claes Oldenberg's drawings of enormous monuments of fire plugs or clothespins set in wildly inappropriate locations shock and amuse us, so could much of what Christo has done and proposes to do, without the bother and expense of actual construction.

The banners are better than some other Christo ideas. They are a well known accompaniment to public celebrations. These will hang down, blow in the wind, and be fun to walk through. But 15,000 of them, 27 miles of them, at a cost of $6 million? That seems an egotistical invasion of a major public space that says nothing at all, and could say everything it possibly had to say if it extended for one mile (or less) instead of 27.

Indeed, one of the problems with much modern art—sculpture, paintings, buildings—is how *little* goes on in it. (Christo wouldn't

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dream of putting anything on his 15,000 banners—color, emblems, or what you will.) One is so often presented with enormous flat surfaces, undifferentiated massive objects, single colors spread on huge canvases. This may be understandable with modern buildings, struggling as they do with both huge scale and the contemporary absence (or extraordinary expense) of craftsmen to embellish a surface.

There is no reason why canvases and sculpture have to contend with the same problem of scale, but modern painters and sculptors insist on doing so. In part, this is a response to the scale of buildings. If a painting, a sculpture, a weaving, is to make an impact in an enormous lobby, it must be enormous too, and if a sculpture is to be noticed in an open space dominated by 500 foot high buildings, it has to be very big.

But in this case, the elephantiasis characteristic of much modern art has no such justification. Central Park is not a bland landscape that might evoke a similar repetitious blandness of embellishment, or that needs to be dressed up. The defenders of Olmsted will certainly point out how much more could be done with $6 million to restore this masterpiece of landscape design—with its varieties of meadows and rocks and trees and bushes, with its bridges and lakes and ponds, its open vistas and quiet and secret places—than covering everything with curtains. (And the practical will undoubtedly wonder whether an endless array of curtains might not provide better cover for escaping muggers, assaulters of joggers, robbers of bicycles.)

Nor is there justification in that anything is being celebrated. If there were a public event, it might be nice to heighten it with a construction such as Christo's—perhaps some gateways at appropriate entrances to the park, or a series of them marking the way to the event. But why meticulously and obsessively cover *every* walkway in the park? And recall how many walkways, particularly in the underserved northern sector, run through wild scenery, designed to give an illusion of distance from the city and the feeling of being plunged into untouched nature, which was of course the intention of Olmsted and Vaux. To introduce considerations of equity and minority interest as justifications for this uniquely personal and obsessive vision seems, at the least, disingenuous. Public art, to some extent, ought to celebrate a public purpose. What is the public purpose here?

Christo, meeting with one of the discussion groups organized by CPC&H, said, "I am anxious to do a project related to the human scale." For Christo, The Gates is apparently of human scale. But I am reminded of the encounter between Charles Abrams, the urban expert, and the archtitect Minoru Yamasaki, designer of the *two gigantic towers of the World Trade Center*. "Very interesting," said Abrams, "but why two towers? Why not one, twice as tall?" As Abrams told the story, Yamasaki answered, "Because I was concerned to preserve human scale."

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Perhaps it would be nice to have a few banners flowing in the wind at some of the entrances to Central Park, and perhaps some of the walks could be decorated with an array of Christo's gates for some event worthy of celebration. If Christo had spent the $50,000 the newspapers report as being the cost of the CPC&H survey, he could have put up (if his calculations of cost are right) a hundred gates. I think that would have been quite enough. After all, there are only 36 Rockettes.

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# Religion in Middletown

THEODORE CAPLOW

FIVE years ago, Howard Bahr, Bruce Chadwick, and I went back to the hospitable community that Robert and Helen Lynd studied in the 1920's and again in the 1930's to see what the intervening half century had done to its social institutions. The Lynds called Muncie, Indiana "Middletown," a name they borrowed from a nearby village. It is the practice in social research to assign pseudonyms to communities that are studied, and many of these have become famous: Yankee City, Elm Town, Plainville, Southerntown, Eastern City, Crestwood Heights, Park Forest. But Middletown is the most famous of all, perhaps because it is so near the center of American culture. The Lynds chose it because it had no "outstanding peculiarities or acute local problems."

That was almost 60 years ago. The children the Lynds observed are elderly or dead. The population has tripled, from about 40,000 to about 120,000 in the city and its suburbs. Most of the factories are still operating, but some have closed and many are approaching obsolescence. The little teachers' college has grown into a state university that is now the community's largest employer. The population is not quite as homogeneous as it used to be: There are proportionately more blacks (12 percent) and more Catholics (22 percent) now. Despite these changes, Middletown seems to us to have preserved, in large measure, the identity and atmosphere the Lynds described in the 1920's and the 1930's.

If technology provides us with the thrill of rapid change, social institutions can do the same. In 1924, the federal government was represented in Middletown by a handful of postal employees and occasional visits by the U.S. Marshal based in Indianapolis. In the ten years prior to 1976, 29 agencies of the federal government operated more than 90 separate programs of social improvement and

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*The study's findings about religion will be reported at length in* All Faithful People, *a multi-authored volume to be published by the University of Minnesota Press later this year. This research project was supported by the National Science Foundation, grant no. SOC 75-13580. The investigators were Theodore Caplow, Howard M. Bahr, and Bruce A. Chadwick.*

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control in Middletown, and spent nearly $700 million on them. At least half of Middletown's families, the rich as well as the poor, depend on direct payments from the federal government for a substantial part of their incomes. The change from an autonomous, private economy to one largely controlled by the national state is rather spectacular.

But these changes may dazzle us so much that we cannot see the continuities that go along with them. For example, we may compare a present situation, accurately observed, with a past situation, imaginatively constructed out of whole cloth—like that American past when everyone went to church and the rules of morality were universally respected. We also tend to fabricate a picture of the present out of scraps of surmise and wisps of anxiety. "Organized religion," says a minister from the pulpit, "is sadly weak. Churches are plagued by crippling problems. Membership and Sunday school enrollments are down seriously." Statistically, this is nonsense, but it has a persuasive ring.

American religion is too large a phenomenon for comprehensive observation. That is why we have taken the opportunity to examine the changes in religious practices and beliefs that have taken place in a single community, where, by great good fortune, we have an accurate, highly-detailed description of religious life more than 50 years ago to compare with the picture that emerges from the surveys we conducted there between 1977 and 1981.

It was Alexis de Tocqueville who first described the American system of religion and ventured to explain it. He asked himself why the division of Christianity into "innumerable sects" and the total separation of the clergy from politics had reinforced, rather than diminished, the influence of religion and the connection between religion and morality. He wondered too why Americans were so much more religious than Europeans when religion in America entirely lacked the official support that it then enjoyed in every European country:

> One may suppose that a certain number of Americans, in the worship they offer to God, are following their habits rather than their convictions . . . Nonetheless America is still the place where the Christian religion has kept the greatest real power over men's souls . . . The religious atmosphere of the country was the first thing that struck me on arrival in the United States. The longer I stayed in the country, the more conscious I became of the important political consequences resulting from this novel situation.
> . . . I wondered how it could come about that by diminishing the apparent power of religion one increased its real strength and I thought it not impossible to discover the reason.

Tocqueville's explanation was that the fragmentation of American religion prevented it from developing any alliance with the state. A religion could only be destroyed, he thought, by involvement in

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the shifting currents of politics, or by another religion. American religion was protected from the latter danger by its sectarian fragmentation, and from the former by the indigenous doctrine that church and state should be entirely separate.

Tocqueville observed that all the American denominations preached the same morality and held the same conception of civic duty:

> There is an innumerable multitude of sects in the United States. They are all different in the worship they offer to the Creator, but all agree concerning the duties of men to one another.

As a practicing Catholic, Tocqueville sought out and made friends with Catholic priests in his travels. He was fascinated to discover that Catholicism, which in Europe was then considered the bulwark of absolutism and social hierarchy, supported democratic liberties in America with as much fervor as any of the Protestant denominations, and that the Catholic clergy in the United States, like their Protestant colleagues, stood aloof from politics, took no part in government, and drew a sharp line between religious and secular issues.

Over 150 years later, Tocqueville's description is still partly applicable to the condition of religion in Middletown. The sects, if not innumerable, are very numerous. We counted 24 denominations in 1980 that had church buildings and paid ministers; about 35 more denominations are represented in various ways, and there are many independent churches as well. For the most part, they hold common views about private and public morality, supporting, in the private sphere, monogamous marriage, family solidarity, the Ten Commandments, private charity, self-control, self-improvement, dutifulness, and patience under suffering; and, in the public sphere, supporting patriotism, the authority of the law, democracy, and human rights. They are less unanimous with respect to those specific issues where the separation between religion and politics has been breached, either by the rise of social activism within denominations or by the expansion of governmental activity into the domain formerly reserved for religion. Middletown's denominations do not agree very much about abortion, parochial education, the equality of the sexes, or the obligation of military service. But, aside from such politicized issues, there is little difference to be noted between the moral positions of Catholics and Quakers, Presbyterians and Nazarenes, Methodists and Jews.

WHEN the Lynds observed the churches of Middletown in 1924, the abstention of the clergy from politics was as complete as it had been in Tocqueville's time, although the ministers of business-class congregations might occasionally echo from the pulpit the sentiments of their golf partners about labor unions or refer in passing to "godless Bolshevism." When the Lynds came back to Middletown ten years later, in the midst of the Great Depression,

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they were themselves much more committed to social activism than they had been before, and they found it deplorable that only a few Middletown ministers had increased their political involvement in response to the depression. The sermon topics of 1935 were interchangeable with those of a decade before and had almost nothing to say about current events. The Ministerial Association had no program for the depression. The Lynds were distressed to see that, with one or two exceptions, the churches of Middletown were taking no position at all on "internationalism, disarmament, pacifism, labor organization, social planning in the interest of the masses and the redistribution of wealth, civil liberty, the amendment of the Constitution, socialized medicine, and birth control." And if this was the Protestant pattern, the Catholics and the Jews were even more remote from public issues.

The Lynds saw less virtue in this separation than had Tocqueville. They thought that the churches ought to be more actively coping with social change and lamented that "Middletown's churches appear to be forever bartering the opportunity for leadership in the changeless, as the church defines the latter." And they deplored, as Tocqueville had once applauded, "the encouragement of patriotism by the churches."

In the 1960's, a few more of Middletown's churches developed an active interest in public events. The clergy led the movement; their congregations followed at a distance and with apparent reluctance. A line of fracture developed between "worldly" and "otherworldly" factions within the churches affected by the change. These internal conflicts were particularly sharp in the denominations the Lynds had identified as "business class," especially the Presbyterians and the Methodists. Working-class denominations, like the Southern Baptists, the Adventists, and the Assemblies of God, were untouched by the problem and grew thrivingly between 1960 and 1980, while the Presbyterians and the Methodists declined in membership for the first time in living memory. The Catholics and the Lutherans, wracked by the same issues, barely held their own in membership while their church attendance and ritual participation declined.

Meanwhile, the wall of separation between church and state was breached with enthusiasm by the federal judiciary until, in the words of Chief Justice Burger, it became "a blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier." The Supreme Court decided at various times in the 1970's that transporting parochial students to and from school at public expense is constitutional but transporting them on field trips is unconstitutional; that the loan of public school textbooks to a parochial school is constitutional but the loan of audio-visual material is unconstitutional; that a state may provide guidance counseling for parochial students in a mobile unit but not on their school grounds. It became difficult to tell what the principle of separation between church and state meant in a particular case without resorting to litigation. The Catholics of Middletown, who

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in 1980 sent most of their children to the parochial school, found themselves permanently involved in politics over the question of school aid while, at the same time, the abortion issue joined Catholics and Protestant fundamentalists in an unprecedented alliance. By 1980, the pattern that Tocqueville so much admired—the innumerable sects, their support of a common morality, and their total abstention from politics—had been somewhat damaged by these developments. But it was by no means destroyed. Most of Middletown's churches were still apolitical most of the time and most of them still agreed concerning the duties of men to one another. Indeed, they had found some new areas of agreement.

With respect to doctrine, the faint differences between Protestant denominations have become fainter in the past few decades and the gulf between Protestants and Catholics is now more easily bridged. Middletown people nowadays think nothing at all of attending services or taking communion at a church of some other denomination. Most of Middletown's Protestants have Catholic friends, and attend Catholic services without embarrassment. Catholics, for their part, no longer regard the inside of a Protestant church as a dark, heretical place. Indeed, for some churchgoers, the essential line of division is no longer drawn between Protestants and Catholics but between the sacramental and the evangelical denominations. But this distinction is not absolute either. There has been a charismatic revival among Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans, and some Methodist services have a very sacramental tone. The major denominations no longer coerce or threaten the wavering faithful. Husbands and wives need not copy each other in their religion; it is common for one to attend church regularly while the other stays permanently away. They may belong to different denominations without attracting censure from either set of fellow-communicants. There is no disgrace attached to leaving one church for another or to doing it more than once. The pious are not mocked by unbelievers and the unbelievers are not scorned by the pious.

While duty was the principal motive of church attendance in the 1920's, most of the people who attended church regularly in the 1970's said that they did so for pleasure (and most of those who stayed away regularly did not apologize for their absence). Most people in Middletown are willing to describe their religious experience to a stranger and do so without embarrassment. Those who are "born again" are proud of it, but those who have sloughed off their faith are rather pleased with themselves too.

Most of the changes we recorded in the religious habits of this community over the past half century favor freedom of choice. Most churches have a roughly designated territory and several denominations have precisely demarcated parish boundaries, but parishioners are free to cross them when they wish. Nowhere are worshippers turned away or made to feel unwelcome because they

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come from outside a designated territory, and no Middletown church today pretends to have any authority to compel the attendance of reluctant members. The boundaries between Protestant denominations have become so exceedingly permeable that husband and wife may belong to churches of different denominations without inviting censure in either place. Many people who belong to a church of one denomination regularly attend services at a church of another denomination and contribute to its support. The transfer of a member from one church to another of the same denomination hardly elicits any comment. Transfers between Protestant denominations are viewed with almost the same equanimity. Every Catholic church has a few ex-Protestants and all of the large Protestant churches have a few ex-Catholics, whose presence is taken for granted.

With so few restraints on mobility it might be expected that the churches would be very responsive to "consumer preferences," and indeed they are. The battle between clergy and laity for the possession of the sabbath, which the Lynds described in such detail, has been agreeably settled by reserving Sunday morning for religious services and Sunday afternoon for secular recreation. The revivals, although more numerous than ever, have been shortened to take account of the other interests and obligations of the participants. The onerous parts of religious observance—long sermons, afternoon services, compulsory fasts—have been largely abandoned.

In every measureable way, Middletown's religion has become less puritanical in the past two generations, that is, less conscience-stricken about faults, less censorious about shortcomings, less emphatic about rewards and punishments, and less preoccupied with sex. The theological implications of these changes are not easy to decipher. It might be argued that the importance of religion has been diminished by the relaxation of the moral criteria that formerly separated saints from sinners. On the other hand, the attitudes toward personal conduct that prevail today in most of Middletown's churches are much more compatible with the doctrine of original sin than the former emphasis on moral perfectability. In the fundamentalist churches, this leads to a view of the world as hopelessly corrupt and unimprovable; the goal of the believer is to stop taking the world seriously. In the mainline denominations, it encourages a type of humility that withholds condemnation of even the most heinous personal acts, reserving blame for political and economic "systems." No verse in the New Testament is more widely known or more often quoted in today's Middletown than: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

The language of private religious experience in Middletown has not changed appreciably in the past two generations. For this sector of the local culture, time has stood still. The words and the turns of phrase that people use now to describe their religious feelings are so close to the language of their grandparents that we cannot

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tell them apart. The continuum of commitment that the Lynds discovered in 1924 is still intact, running from people who put their total trust in themselves, to those who rely on themselves and their families, to those who trust in their families and in God, to those who trust in God alone. There are more people now at the pious end of this continuum. Moreover, the differences in devotion that the Lynds described between women and men, and between the working class and the business class, have all but disappeared. The theological differences between denominations, relatively unimportant to the laity in the 1920's, are now for the most part ignored by the clergy too, so that mainline and fundamentalist pastors differ more in style than in substance on creedal issues, although they differ profoundly in their social and political attitudes.

The elements of Middletown's shared Christian creed—God, Jesus, the Bible, church, heaven, morality—are not very differently perceived by Nazarenes, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, or Lutherans, and only some differences of emphasis separate these from Unitarians or Roman Catholics. Seventh-Day Adventists, Quakers, Mormons, Christian Scientists, and Jehovah's Witnesses do diverge somewhat from the majority creed, but these divisions are much subdued in the ecumenical atmosphere of contemporary Middletown. With respect to the doctrinal differences that ostensibly account for the existence of so many Protestant denominations—disagreement about episcopal authority, free will and predestination, the efficacy of sacraments, infant or adult baptism, original sin, revelation, and the interpretation of scripture—we could not find a flicker of interest among laymen, who for the most part are unaware of the beliefs they are supposed to hold on these contentious points. And although the clergy are aware of the finer points of theology, they are even less inclined to argue them with the representatives of other denominations.

The same harmonious spirit that suppresses theological arguments before they begin inhibits censure of other people's behavior. Sin is still regularly denounced from the pulpits but sinners are treated with consideration. Divorced persons are admitted to communion, suicides are buried in consecrated ground, and wayward youth are counseled, not excommunicated. Hester Prynne would be welcomed at a church supper nowadays and, after a little discreet whispering, would be treated with special kindness.

The new tolerance is the most striking change in Middletown's religion in the past half century; indeed, it represents a remarkable departure from normal Christian practice. Not only do Protestants speak well of each other and benignly of Catholics, but they abstain from condemnation of the heathen and favor teaching about Buddhism in the public schools. There is no longer any preaching against the Pope at revival meetings. There are no more diatribes against the Jews in Easter sermons. The anti-American displays of Moslem mobs during the Iranian hostage crisis and the shooting of the Pope by a Moslem assassin did not bring Middle-

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town's Christians to murmur against Islam. Religion of any kind is almost immune to criticism. The wrath of the godly is now reserved for such secular targets as bureaucrats and pornographers. Although Middletown's churches support more foreign missionary activity now than in 1924, those efforts are now construed to be directed against poverty, hunger, and social injustice, not against "pagan religions."

Many new styles of religious observance have developed outside the customary framework of church worship: televised services, gospel music concerts, home prayer groups, coffee house ministries, retreat centers, charismatic conferences. Most of these new rituals were designed for the cultivation of holiness rather than the enactment of solemnity, but even so more than a third of the Catholics and mainline Protestants participated in them along with more than two-thirds of the Baptists, Nazarenes, and Pentecostals. We do not know whether there has been a long-term drift towards religious solemnity which has recently been checked by liturgical reform and charismatic innovation or whether, on the contrary, solemnity has been waning for a long time.

The Lynds thought they saw a trend toward solemnity in the decline of the revival movement from 1890 to 1924, but that decline was illusory. The trend in revivals since 1924 is equally inconclusive. There were 106 revivals in Middletown in 1980 compared to 33 in 1924—an increase that more than kept pace with the growth of the population—but the 1980 revivals were shorter and involved a smaller proportion of the local churches. Meanwhile, the conventional forms of Christian piety—prayer, fasting, meditation, almsgiving—all flourish in contemporary Middletown. What was supposed to be the age of skepticism has turned out to be an age of faith.

Yet it would be a serious error to visualize this community as a museum of old-time religion. Pious as Middletown is, the survey evidence seems to tell us that it is rather less pious than the country as a whole. Comparing our 1977-78 surveys of Middletown with the 1979-80 national surveys of the Princeton Religious Research Center, we find that 16 percent of Middletown adults reported "no religious preference" compared to 8 percent of the national sample. Twenty-nine percent of Middletown adolescents say they have no religious preference compared to 11 percent of the corresponding national sample. Thirty-two percent of Middletown adults attend church weekly compared to 41 percent of the national sample. Sixteen percent of Middletown people say they never pray, compared to 11 percent of the national sample. Although the differences are modest and may be partly procedural, they are significant and consistent.

THE continued vitality of traditional religion in America is something of a puzzle because religion has recently been declining in all of the other advanced industrial nations. Recent cross-national studies show the near disappearance of religion among young

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adults in France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, West Germany, Switzerland, and Japan, all among the world's most modernized countries. For example, the proportions of young adults in these countries who think that religion should be very important in life ranged in 1980 from 7 percent in France to 11 percent in Sweden, compared to 14 percent in the United States. If the trends of the past two decades were to continue, organized religion would become a negligible force in those national societies but there would be no real change in the situation of American religion.

What then can we say about the future of religion in Middletown? The methods available to sociology for peering into the future are not very powerful and, to speak candidly, they have not worked very well even in the hands of the masters of the discipline. When it comes to predicting the future course of Middletown's religion, social science provides us very little help because its most reliable device, the extrapolation of existing trends, is not applicable in the circumstances. As we have seen, the trend of Middletown's religion in the past century has been inconclusive; the general level of religious belief and practice is not very different today from what it was a century ago and the leading tenets of popular theology have remained virtually the same for at least two generations. Organizationally, the Protestant churches have grown a little stronger and the Catholic church a little weaker. There is much more tolerance between churches and a good deal of ecumenical good will that was formerly lacking, but no more cooperation than before toward common goals. The denominations of Middletown are perhaps more significant as sources of personal identity today than they were two generations ago, but the difference is small and is balanced by a modest decline in religious endogamy.

The long-term trend continues to elude us, but that is probably because it is not a very clear trend. Mind you, we do not say there have been no changes in organized religion in the past half century—that would be absurd. Liturgies have changed, attitudes have changed, rules of conduct have changed. The sexual morality preached in Middletown's churches in 1980 is quite different from what it was in 1960, let alone 1900. A mass in one of Middletown's Catholic churches nowadays—in English, the priest facing the congregation, the kiss of peace exchanged afterward—bears little resemblance to the stately Latin ritual of 1960. The same Presbyterians and Lutherans who speak in tongues nowadays would not have spoken to anyone who defended the practice a few years ago. The Episcopal church has women priests and a new prayerbook. There are people in Middletown who practice witchcraft seriously and others who shave their heads and meditate on reincarnation. There are enough new things under the sun in Middletown's religion to amaze and delight a curious observer. But we have not been able to find any trace of the great massive trend that was supposed to be carrying us irresistibly out of an age of faith into an age of practical reason. What has happened instead—the persistence and re-

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newal of religion in a changing society—is much more interesting than the secularization that never occurred.

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# The Refugees: What "Infighting"?

VICTOR H. PALMIERI

PROFESSOR AMITAI ETZIONI was resident sociologist in the Carter White House during 1980 when I was serving in the State Department as Ambassador-at-Large and U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs. In that capacity, I had occasion to consider and reject his proposal to involve community-based social service organizations (such as United Way) in the resettlement process along with the traditional, specialized private refugee agencies such as the U.S. Catholic Conference, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, and the like. His article on his proposal in a recent issue of *The Public Interest* ("Refugee Resettlement: The Infighting in Washington," Fall 1981) invites a response.

It is his thesis that my lack of enthusiasm for what he calls the "voluntary option" reflected my determination to "federalize" the resettlement process. In his view, apparently, the energies of the Coordinator's office were largely dedicated to a series of intricate bureaucratic maneuvers designed to defeat his proposal in order to protect my jurisdiction and enlarge the federal government's.

Why this expression of professional pique deserved to be memorialized in *The Public Interest* is unclear. The Professor's penchant for metaphors of aggression—"infighting," "winning," "battles" and "war"—suggests a serious level of personal agitation. In fact, there was no need for "infighting" because the Professor's proposal never attracted serious support. Even if it had, the timing was hardly propitious. Nearly 20,000 refugees were arriving in the U.S. every month, swelling the welfare roles, absorbing scarce housing, and causing a rising outcry from mayors and governors wherever refugees were concentrating.

There were also other minor distractions, among them the Cambodian famine, the flow of Indochinese into Thailand and the other first asylum countries of Southeast Asia, the massive humanitarian problems in Somalia and Pakistan, and the continuing arrivals of Haitian boat people in southern Florida. These concerns forced constant shuttling between Washington, Geneva, Bangkok, and other Southeast Asian capitals and refugee centers, along with visits to areas of refugee concentration around the U.S. In April, the Cuban boatlift suddenly became the overwhelming priority for the Co-

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ordinator's office and, for the entire government, second only to the hostage crisis in Iran.

THE difficulty with Professor Etzioni's idea, however, was not simply bad timing; it was simply a bad idea. The specialized resettlement agencies did lack the resources to follow up with casework after initial reception, but they were the logical instruments for that purpose in terms of commitment and experience. What was needed to extend their services, which were already significantly underfunded, was a long-term funding commitment beyond the reception and placement grants they receive from the State Department. With over 230,000 refugees (Indochinese, Soviet Jews, Eastern Europeans, and others) plus 150,000 Cubans and Haitians entering the country in 1980, the idea of dumping the casework problem in the laps of the privately-funded community-based social service agencies was ludicrous. The suggestion that they were willing or even eager to assume this monumental burden without Federal government support and without any of the specialized infrastructure in place lacked credibility then as it does now. There was certainly opportunity for them to communicate their enthusiasm to the White House and the Congress if they wished to overcome my disinterest. They are not accustomed to pass up such opportunities.

More importantly, to draw the major voluntary organizations such as United Way into refugee support activity meant diverting their attention and resources from the mounting problems of blacks and other disadvantaged domestic minorities. Unprecedented numbers of refugees and migrants were saturating the secondary labor markets of major urban centers at a time when the labor economy was under growing stress, and tensions over jobs and housing were rising in the minority community. Congress had already mandated relatively rich welfare, Medicare, and social service benefits for refugees. For the Administration to try to mobilize voluntary sector resources customarily dedicated to minority communities on behalf of refugees was on its face not only foolish but insensitive.

PROFESSOR ETZIONI apparently was (and obviously still is) innocent of these realities. I regret that I could not take the time to educate him. His analysis of my motives, however, is less innocent. His suggestion, that with all the competing crises at hand I was ignoring the overwhelming logic of his proposal to preserve my own turf, is a sad commentary on his own standards of professional discourse. The U.S. Coordinator has a statutory responsibility to coordinate all refugee programs and policies, international and domestic—a $2 billion effort in 1980. For that purpose he presides over a massive bureaucracy consisting of 15 people, including secretarial and clerical personnel. The State Department's Bureau of Refugee Programs, which manages relief and resettlement programs offshore, has some 90 employees scattered over the globe. Both of these units rely entirely on the specialized resettlement

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agencies to carry out the processing, reception, and placement of refugees for resettlement in the United States. During my tenure as U.S. Coordinator I met regularly—indeed often on a weekly basis—with the heads of these agencies to consult on resettlement policies and problems. Without them, neither the State Department nor the Department of Health and Human Services could possibly fulfill their respective responsibilities in the refugee field. My concern was to augment rather than dilute the private sector funding available to them.

All this was doubly true in the circumstances of the Cuban boatlift crisis, when we were forced to call on the resettlement agencies to deal with the massive influx—which included a large number of notoriously difficult cases—with only the hope of future federal funding. For Professor Etzioni to say that "the bureaucrats won all the battles but lost the 'war'" because "Most refugees . . . were resettled the voluntary way" reflects again his persistent isolation from the facts. All of the Cubans were resettled the voluntary way for the simple reason that there was—and is—no other way.[1]

Ironically, Etzioni's preoccupation with turf issues leads him to overlook the statutory basis of "federalization," namely Title IV of the Refugee Act of 1980. For 25 years prior to the Act, refugee flows were funded on an ad hoc basis by special legislation, with the result that Hungarians and Czechs and, later, Soviet Jews, Eastern Europeans, Cubans, and Indochinese received differing levels of benefits and services. In Title IV, Congress sought to standardize the federal role in refugee resettlement by granting states up to 100 percent reimbursement for eligible costs associated with providing cash and medical assistance and other forms of social services. With the enormous increase in U.S. resettlement flows resulting from the exodus from Indochina, public assistance has become a fixture in the resettlement process. Refugees now enter the country with a sophisticated understanding of the assistance programs available to them and are routinely steered to the welfare office shortly after their arrival. The result is that an increasing proportion of the refugee population—particularly the Indochinese—is involved with the welfare culture, creating growing dependency, tensions with community groups, and high costs for the taxpayer. How to center refugee resettlement within the private sector with Title IV on the books is an important question of public policy, possibly even more important than the Professor's travails in Washington.

*Victor H. Palmieri is chairman of* Victor Palmieri & Co., Inc. *and is the former Ambassador-at-Large and U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs.*

[1] There are other oddities in his essay. For instance, the fact that the Coordinator's Office was funded and staffed indicates to the Professor that ". . . Palmieri seemed to have won . . . He was on his way to setting up yet one more bureaucracy." In fact, the office was funded under annual State Department budget and was staffed when I took over from Dick Clark in January, 1980.

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# Federal "Involvement" of Voluntary Agencies

AMITAI ETZIONI

VICTOR PALMIERI's new response to the voluntary option for resettlement of refugees opens a whole new possible interpretation of his refusal to embrace it: Maybe it really was not empire-building on his side, but simply that he did not understand the idea. If so, he still does not.

The proposal was *not* for "involving community-based social service organizations in the resettlement problem," but to turn it over to them, lock, stock, and barrel. It was precisely the continued desire of federal bureaucrats to "involve" agencies, to make them do the work but to regulate, direct, and coopt them, which was one major factor in limiting voluntarism in this area.

Palmieri writes that the *specialized* resettlement agencies lacked the required resources, which is quite true. For just this reason, the suggestion was to invite major voluntary organizations, from the Red Cross to the Salvation Army, organizations which previously had not taken on this problem, to form a new emergency coalition.

The suggestion that these organizations were overwhelmed with other duties implies that voluntary organizations are a zero-sum game—if you give more to one cause, you give less to another. It ignores the tendency of people to give more when there is a truly deserving, urgent, "new" need, and reduce their private consumption a bit—not necessarily their other giving. Palmieri's commingling of the domestic and international programs, to arrive at the $2 billion figure, is unfortunate. The voluntary proposal dealt exclusively with domestic resettlement of refugees.

As to the timing: The idea was launched before the Cuban crisis. The fact remains, though, that when the flood of Cuban refugees did further exacerbate the problem, *still* most refugees were in fact resettled by voluntary efforts, despite a continued drive by federal bureaucrats to make a new federal agency and "program" out of refugees. Moreover, now several hundred thousand El Salvadorans too are being absorbed in this way. Here and there are pockets of difficulties, which the media play up, but the big picture is that of a very great personal, community, private, voluntary—successful—effort.

Palmieri refers twice to a "statutory" basis of federalization, implying that he had no choice in the matter. But what Congress has done, it can undo, especially if helped by the Palmieris.

I agree with Palmieri on one point: The issue is not the fate of my idea or the scope of his misconception. The question is whether there are not *some* social problems which should not be federalized, especially when (like refugee resettlement) they are short-term and highly mobilizing.

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I will not join Palmieri in *ad hominem* adjectives and other personal slurs. But I must point out that after he refused steadfastly to meet with leaders of the big voluntary agencies to discuss their participation in the resettlement work, for him to point to their absence at his door as a sign of indifference is curious indeed.

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# SUMMER BOOKS

*A Special Supplement*

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William Kristol on Democratic Capitalism

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# The American Intellectual Vocation

H. J. KAPLAN

***William Barrett:* The Truants: Adventures among the Intellectuals.** *Doubleday. 278 pp. $15.95.*

WHILE waiting to serve as a juror at the New York County Court, I have been reading and rereading William Barrett's *The Truants,* a book about the old *Partisan Review* circle: Philip Rahv, William Phillips, *et al.,* their ideas, their personalities, and what became of them over the years. This was the crucial period just before and after World War II when America ceased to play the role of a *deus ex machina* in Europe's agony and became a major protagonist in the drama of the West. I find the book admirable and curiously moving. Barrett's generation was my own, give or take a few years, and the courthouse is an ironically appropriate setting for his reminiscences because they remind me that I too was once a "truant" in the sense that Barrett gives the word, although he never suggests that this was or is an indictable offense. I keep looking around at the marble columns and pale murals wondering at the enormous changes that have brought us, those who survived, from that point to this.

We jurors are here, most of us at some inconvenience, because we believe that we owe this service to the community. Such an attitude would have been considered ludicrous during the heroic days of *Partisan Review.* As intellectuals we were alienated *in principle* from the community, which meant that if we were politically inclined we confronted it with opposition, or with cunning tactics if we were artists; in any event, the community was not ours.

SUCH was the general view, obviously derived from the classic Marxist analysis of bourgeois society but in fact (as it turned out) bearing a very questionable and complicated relation to what we actually felt and thought. Thus, an important function of *Partisan Review* was precisely to put that idea in question and, in so doing, to promote a drastic reappraisal of Marxism—and much else—although we could not foresee this at the time.

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The magazine had been founded (or, more precisely, resumed, since it had had a brief history as a Communist organ a few years earlier) in 1937 by two dissident Marxist critics, Philip Rahv and William Phillips, who rejected "socialist realism" and maintained in defiance of the official Party line that the literary avant garde and political radicalism were not incompatible; indeed these belonged together. This proposition may appear to be self-evident, but it was not—and is not, as we shall see. In any case, the dissent of Rahv and Phillips seems to have come at a propitious time, after a decade during which the Communist Party, despite its insignificance as a grass-roots political force, had achieved a disproportionate and finally stultifying influence on our cultural life. *Partisan Review* was welcomed. It quickly became clear that this was more than another "little" magazine.

ENTER Will Barrett, a young man from Queens who did his undergraduate studies at City College, made the acquaintance of Delmore Schwartz, taught philosophy at some remote place (Rhode Island), and then went off to war, where his most memorable experience seems to have been guiding Edmund Wilson (incongruously accoutered as a war correspondent) around Rome. Indeed, what is memorable for Barrett (in this book, at least) exclusively concerns the life of the mind and the people who lived it; he makes a point of providing few autobiographical details, preferring that we focus on the other "truants" and on the issues. But he comes through as an exceptionally intelligent and earnest young man with a shy warm sensibility and a somewhat off-key sense of humor —by which I simply mean that the anecdotes he tells and the witticisms he quotes are usually (if not always) as funny as he thinks they are.

Returning from Italy in 1945, Barrett decided not to go back to his teaching job but to play truant—to stay in New York and seek his fortune. His ambition being noble as his mood was buoyant, and the fortune he dreamed of having nothing to do with material wealth or power, he began by knocking at the door of Delmore Schwartz, the brilliant young poet who had burst upon the literary scene a few years before the war in something of the grand Byronic manner and who now, after the failure of his second book, was showing the first signs of the disorientation and mental illness which were to lead to his madness and early death. Schwartz was then an associate editor of *Partisan Review* and still on good terms with Rahv, the dominant and domineering member of the group; and there was a felt need, Barrett now surmises, for an editor fresh from that Europe toward which the *Partisan* people continued to look as the luminous source and center of the ideas they most highly valued. Whatever the reasons, he was invited to join the magic circle and lived its rather harrowing life for a number of years, the years of Delmore's disintegration and of the growing (and finally irreconcilable) rift between Phillips and Rahv.

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In the wider world outside some rather dramatic things were happening, too; and while these are scarcely reflected in Barrett's narrative, one feels their gathering weight. The postwar buoyancy gradually disappeared. "It's 1919 all over again!" Schwartz had exclaimed in welcoming Barrett back to New York; and Barrett also looked forward to a great burst of creative energy after the war. (Implied here, be it said in passing, is a most extraordinary view of the 1920's, a period which did produce a great flowering of modernist literature and painting and a great burst of *ideas*, in the *Partisan Review* sense of the word; but it was a period that also, after the unprecedented carnage of 1914-1918, produced Bolshevism, Fascism, Stalinism, Nazism, and World War II.) In any event, the circle was losing its magic. Some rather intractable problems had come up; reality was setting in.

What Barrett went through was a rather brutal *éducation sentimentale*, and the tone perceptibly deepens as we proceed from the exuberant atmosphere of his apprenticeship to the mood of quiet seriousness in which he writes his memoir. The learning process is palpable: It is the substance of his book, although he does not always pause when one would expect him to for an answer to the questions his story suggests. One fascinating theme that he never explicitly confronts, for example, is the nature of the intellectual vocation in this country, which is quite different from that of Bloomsbury, say, or of the Left Bank, where the literary intellectuals not only knew each other but were intricately (albeit ambivalently) connected with the governing elites, the universities, and other traditional power centers. Raymond Aron and Jean-Paul Sartre, who were classmates and close friends at the Ecole Normale, knew practically "everyone" in France from the 1930's on. To be sure, Aron once remarked that "everyone" in Paris meant 40,000 persons and (like Aron and Sartre) they were not always on speaking terms; but the fact remains.

Barrett leaves one with the impression that the *Partisan Review* people knew practically no one north of 14th Street, aside from Lionel Trilling and Meyer Shapiro, although their circle did somewhat widen as eminence overtook them. Not until the Kennedy administration did anyone in Washington show any interest in them, unless it was the C.I.A. and the professionals of cultural exchange. During the early years they all seemed to speak with foreign accents, even when their names were Burnham, Macdonald, or George L.K. Morris. I was living in Paris at that time, whence I contributed reports on the local situation to the magazine, whose editors I had briefly met in New York and only superficially knew. Barrett, on the other hand, was deeply and emotionally involved with them. Yet I remember them much as he describes them today: brilliant, intense, rude, fiercely divided but recognizable as a group. One had the impression sometimes that they had been lifted bodily from some Viennese or Budapest café, flown through a rarefied

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atmosphere like so many Chagallian *luftmenschen*, and deposited intact in Greenwich Village. "Partisansky Review," Edmund Wilson once called the magazine, although he was pleased to appear in it. There was, in fact, no more distinguished place to appear. And from Barrett I learn that the same Edmund Wilson once referred to Rahv and Phillips as "Potash and Perlmutter"—a couple of Jewish comic-strip businessmen from the days when ethnic humor was not yet taboo. (This makes me chuckle aloud, startling my fellow jurors, who are reading or doing crossword puzzles while we wait to be called. Someone comments that it must be an amusing book. I allow that it is.)

IN fact, it is much more than that, although it presents itself at first as a modest collection of anecdotes, an indulgent memoir. Barrett is now, three or four decades after the events he relates, a distinguished professor of philosophy, with a wise and insightful mind. Such a mind is less enamored than it was with the idea of *ideas*. It is modest and indulgent by definition, having begun to learn how little we know. The humor is wry, like that of the contemporary Frenchman (was it Cocteau?) who, when asked to name the greatest 19th-century French poet, replied: "Victor Hugo, alas." So, for Barrett, it is *Partisan Review*, alas. But his modesty should not be mistaken for the contempt that trivializes our experience—a wretched stance (in my opinion) for a memorialist. He does not let us forget that this was an enterprise of great pith and moment, one that marked our cultural history and changed our lives. For all his relaxed and quiet demeanor, he is telling a cautionary tale, one that spans the great abyss between then and now and helps us understand who we are.

The result, for a reader of Barrett's generation, at least, is a curiously elegiacal tone that may or may not be perceptible to others, rarely dominant but always there. This is the intensity of the *Partisan Review* spirit recollected—not always in tranquillity, perhaps, but serenely and sadly, as when (in the last anecdote of the book) he tells how he broke down and wept at the spectacle of Delmore Schwartz reduced to his terminal dementia, wildly bellowing and raving. Barrett recounts this awful incident without wasting a word, contemplates the shattered young man he was and concludes: "There crossed my mind the ancient story of the father weeping for a dead child. A stoic philosopher, passing by, tells the father: Why do you weep? It is irrational. Your weeping will not bring him back to life. The father replies: That is why I weep, because it cannot bring him back!" So it is his present persona, Professor Barrett, who recollects and (as the existentialists like to say) assumes his emotion. The mature man has the final word.

THIS is very fine. It reminds me of the ancient Hebrew litany, intoned after each of a series of instances of God's grace: *This*

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*would have been sufficient.* Yet I have hardly begun to explain how the issues Barrett raises so far transcend our curiosity, not to speak of our nostalgia, that his memoir becomes an important contribution to our intellectual history.

To be sure, Barrett would hardly have qualified for the *Annales* or as any sort of historian. He never bothers to tell us how the magazine was put together, what it looked like, how much it cost, or even how often it appeared. We know that it played a role, an initiatory and a shaping one, in the larger culture, but Barrett never enquires into how that happened or what effect it had on American society as a whole. Doctoral theses will doubtless be written one day on how the *Partisan* idea of "ideas" affected Saul Bellow's fiction, or Lionel Trilling's criticism. But these are matters that do not concern the author of *The Truants.* His pilgrim's progress deals with a handful of people, not because they are alleged to be the "saving remnant" or because they wield power, or indeed for any reason that he feels it incumbent on him to state. The young Will Barrett, our distinguished professor seems to be saying, encountered these people and wrestled with their ideas and thus became the man who is telling these tales.

As for the magazine itself, it was a free-floating enterprise, perhaps the last of its kind, without support from church or state. The important thing was not how the bills were paid but simply the life that *Partisan Review* represented—the life of the mind. This is what drew the young Barrett into the magic circle; and this is what the elder Barrett illuminates retrospectively in the anecdotes he selects (out of an apparently endless supply) and the brilliant commentary which weaves that aerial span between then and now. It is deftly done. The inner circle of Rahv, Phillips, and Schwartz widens to take in Mary McCarthy, Dwight Macdonald, Clement Greenberg, James Burnham, Sidney Hook, Lionel Trilling, Saul Bellow, Harold Rosenberg, Randall Jarrell—but it is hopeless to try to name them all.

Nor need one agree with everything that Barrett has come to believe about these people and their preoccupations to recognize that the *Partisan* experience had an extraordinary pertinence and staying power. The filiation with what has come to be called neoconservatism, for example, is striking. Barrett's personal orientation drew him to philosophy rather than to sociology, economics, or political economy, but in the *Partisan Review* conception the intellectual could take no refuge in specialization. Truancy itself was a refuge, but you paid for it (like your ancestors, the *philosophes*, or the 19th-century posterity of Goethe), by taking a position on *every* issue, so that your curriculum was marked not by jobs, marriages, and children, but by a series of points of view. And this is where Barrett is most impressive, analyzing the progress over the years of each of the *Partisan* people, as well as that of their European visitors. I cannot remember having read anywhere, for example, a more penetrating brief analysis of existentialism, or of Jean-Paul Sartre's

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pseudo-version of it. (In France, so far as I know, only Raymond Aron has suggested what Barrett clearly and simply shows: that Sartre was not an existentialist at all.)

NOR has anyone, I submit, more keenly grasped the central dilemma of Lionel Trilling—"the most intelligent man of his generation" Barrett calls him—in attempting to bring a naturalistic and Freudian outlook to bear on the phenomena of modernism. Barrett's analysis of Trilling's relationship with the magazine is brilliant, combining a keen and sympathetic sense of the personalities involved (especially Rahv, Schwartz, and Trilling himself) with perceptive insight into what—intellectually—was at stake. Here is where the history of ideas takes on the liveliness, the comedy, and the intensity of one of those 19th-century Russian novels that the *Partisan* people prized so highly. Barrett shows how Trilling became increasingly suspect to Rahv and Schwartz as his published work (and his "bourgeois" life) revealed an essentially civil, moderate, and cultured temperament, in the Arnoldian sense; a preference for "manners" and hence a culpable indulgence towards the traditional societies in which they were valued; and a certain attitude of irony, if not distaste, with respect to that "discovery and canonization of the primal, non-ethical energies" which he saw as characteristic of modern literature.

Trilling, in short, was suspected of *lèse-modernisme*—and for good reason; he was accused of "boring from within" and "protecting his left flank." But Barrett takes his analysis a step further and shows that this delicate disaffection proceeded from a deeper phenomenon: "the continuing secularization of our culture and the withdrawal from God." This was the ground on which modernism and Marxism grew. It was because Trilling was immunized by his naturalistic outlook against what Barrett calls the "imagination that religion might be true," and by the "chastity" of his mind against radical politics, that he remained off-center and (as Rahv and Schwartz surmised) at odds with *Partisan Review*.

But here, of course, we are on Barrett's home ground. The surprising thing is that he is equally good on the politics of Philip Rahv, the art criticism of Clement Greenberg, and the personalities of the entire gallery of *Partisan Review* people, whom he presents with a minimum of brush strokes and a rare ability to be at once generous and frank.

WHAT did it all come to in the end? An excellent magazine, to be sure, one that—to return to our litany—would have been sufficient. But it fails to explain why *Partisan Review* projected an influence that endures, while literary magazines with far greater resources hardly left a trace. It launched or formed (or at least published) many of our best writers; it was the first American review to unveil the new generation of Europeans, especially the French, who had been developing unbeknownst to us during World

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War II; and it provided an opportunity for the New York academic gurus—Hook, Shapiro, and Trilling—to lecture the world at large. But these (and others I might mention) were people who would have had brilliant careers in any case. They were only intermittently involved—and were often sharply disaffected—with the magazine.

So the question remains. And, here again, Barrett's modesty can be misleading. The anecdotes he tells, with his peculiar melange of gaelic exuberance and yiddish self-mockery (the latter presumably acquired through contagion), leave the impression that Rahv and Phillips and the others were singularly lacking in stature compared to the enterprise they created. And so they were! *Menschlich allzu menschlich!* Witty on occasion, shrewd, comic, pathetic, mysterious in turn, they are brilliantly portrayed as originals, very different each from each, but alike in this respect: They were overshadowed by their enterprise, hardly up to some grand historical role. But this should not really surprise us. The whole, in matters of the spirit, is always greater than the sum of its parts. And the matter, in this case, *was* a spirit, characteristically expressed in a German word that Rahv and Phillips were inordinately fond of: the *Zeitgeist*, a vague and shifting notion which they used to lay claim to a special prescience, a sense of the climate, of what was on the literary and political agenda. And this, I believe, is what made the magazine so memorable. They turned out, on the whole, to be right.

WHAT were on the agenda, of course, were Marxism and modernism. These were not symmetrical phenomena—the one being a doctrine incarnated in a state system and a worldwide political movement, and the other being an aesthetic and existential state of mind. They were not even compatible, as time went on, but this was not yet clear to the literary intelligentsia. *And this was precisely the issue!* By inscribing them both on its banner, *Partisan Review* made itself supremely "relevant," to use the language of a later decade, or "reflected the Zeitgeist," as Rahv and Phillips would have said.

Scattered throughout the land there were thousands of graduate students and younger instructors for whom Joyce and Eliot were sacred texts, just as they were for Barrett. Marxism, on the other hand, was the legacy of the early 1920's, the generation of Randolph Bourne, John Reed, and Max Eastman, *revu et corrigé* by the popular front ideology of the depression years. It remained as a diffuse and powerful influence which had to be dealt with before the literary intellectuals could begin to overcome their "alienation" and find a modus vivendi with the national community—a process, of course, that is still going on. *Partisan Review* was uniquely situated and prepared to help them work it out.

In this sense, the magazine was a self-liquidating enterprise. For modernism—whatever else it did—committed the literary intellectuals to freedom of the spirit; and the postwar years brought

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conclusive proof, even to dialecticians, that freedom could not survive in a Marxist state. It even began to appear that freedom was a conservative, not a revolutionary, idea. So the truants looked elsewhere for refuge, or ceased to be truants. Barrett became a distinguished professor. And I sit here waiting for the county clerk to call my name.

*H. J. Kaplan, who spent 25 years in the Foreign Service, recently retired as editor of* GEO *magazine.*

# Defending Democratic Capitalism

WILLIAM KRISTOL

***Michael Novak:* The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism.** *American Enterprise Institute/Simon and Schuster. 433 pp. $17.50.*

"In good faith," asks Michael Novak, "who can be, by conviction and by a willingness to commit one's life to its defense, a democratic capitalist?" Given the comparative success of democratic capitalist regimes and the evident bankruptcy of the major alternatives, our difficulty in believing wholeheartedly in the worth of our own way of life is striking. Somehow, as Novak comments, "democratic capitalism seems to have lost its spirit"—or perhaps it never found it in the first place, since "the Achilles heel of democratic capitalism is that for two centuries now it has appealed so little to the human spirit." In this ambitious book, Michael Novak seeks to supply what has been lacking, and to defend democratic capitalism by showing it can (and does) justly appeal to the human spirit.

Novak's defense of democratic capitalism may be distinguished from the two major contemporary lines of defense. The first is sober, judicious, and anti-utopian. Democratic capitalism works reasonably well; its citizens tend to be relatively healthy, wealthy, and, if not wise, at least decent. To work as advertised, the alternatives to democratic capitalism would require a transformation of human nature, and turn out to be cruel and miserable in practice. Democratic capitalism does have certain self-corrupting and even self-destructive tendencies, but with the help of prudence and moderation (and certain habits and institutions that have roots outside of democratic capitalism but that can coexist—if somewhat uneasily—with it) these tendencies can be kept in check.

This position is an intellectually powerful one, but it is not terribly inspiring. (Indeed this worldly and mature defense sometimes verges on a world-weary and melancholy lament.) It certainly pales—however unjustly—before the promises of hostile ideologists

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of "human emancipation" and true "liberation." Since the citizens of democratic capitalism—particularly the children of the most successful citizens of democratic capitalism—are susceptible to such promises, the friend of democratic capitalism, whatever his own deepest views, is naturally tempted to move beyond anti-utopian sobriety to try to discover a more inspiring doctrine with which to defend it. Political responsibility almost seems to require such an inspiring defense, if one is possible.

This leads to the second line of defense, the proponents of which look away from the writings of political scientists and sociologists towards political rhetoric itself (which, after all, once had no problem producing inspiring statements on behalf of liberal democracy). These statements served us well in the past and remain available for our use today. Why not, then, simply reiterate our commitment to the principles of the Declaration, to the truths of equality and rights and consent, adopting as our own the inspiring and often beautiful words of Presidents Jefferson or Madison or Lincoln?

The difficulty is that these rhetorical statements tend to be too formal or abstract to supply all that is needed in way of defense. No one will ever improve on Lincoln's speech to the soldiers of the 166th Ohio Regiment on the importance of perpetuating "for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives." "It is in order," Lincoln continued, "that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. . . . The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel." Yet this free government is only an inestimable jewel if its citizens do in fact pursue desirable human aspirations rather than base ones, and if some pursue—and achieve—admirable ends rather than mediocre ones. As Lincoln perfectly understood, the "formal" defense of liberal democracy fails if it is in fact the case (as Solzhenitsyn charged in his Harvard speech) that its citizens use their freedom more often for evil or even silliness than for good, if the substantive effect of democratic capitalism is "the weakening of human beings in the West."

Each of the two main lines of defense of democratic capitalism, then, faces difficulties. The hard-headed sociological defense fails to inspire, and the inspiring rhetorical defense seems divorced from the realities of affluent America. Novak's distinctiveness lies in his attempt to provide an inspiring yet substantive defense of democratic capitalism. He does this in the first and most important part of *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism.* But it will be convenient, before examining the argument of this first section, "The Ideal of Democratic Capitalism," to outline briefly the second and third sections of the book.

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PART TWO of *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* is an analysis of "the twilight of socialism." Novak sketches the transformation of socialism from what it once was—a concrete political program based on a serious intellectual theory—to what it has now become—either a perverse intellectual justification for despotism or a set of expressionistic and self-destructive political gestures based on a vague distaste for democratic capitalism and a (dreamy) affection for equality. Novak's critique of "socialism as highmindedness" helps to lay the groundwork for his explanation in Part One of why he came to think that "the dream of democratic socialism is inferior to the dream of democratic capitalism, and that the latter's superiority in actual practice is undeniable."

Part Three, "A Theology of Economics," is also primarily a critique, in this case of some of the arguments made by theologians against democratic capitalism and in favor of socialism. Novak constructs a virtual syllabus of the political and economic errors made by "Christian socialists" and "liberation theologians" in their pronouncements on this world, as well as exposing the oddness of their theological teachings. He quotes the statement of the influential Protestant theologian, Jurgen Moltmann, that "the oppressed hold in their hand the key for the liberation of mankind from oppression," and suggests that Jewish and Christian theology teach rather that mankind is not going to be liberated from oppression (except perhaps at the end of days). "The world is not going to become—ever—a kingdom of justice and love," and nothing is more pernicious than pretending that a political program—especially one that justifies increased state power—can make it so.

This does not mean, of course, that Novak's attitude toward this world is one of pious resignation, or that he believes it possible entirely to separate religious from political concerns. According to Novak, the Jewish and Christian concept of religious vocation is "not to seek escape from this world" but rather "to take up worldly responsibilities." No particular form of political economy is directly implied or justified by Judaism or Christianity, and Novak cautions that "it is essential, then, not to confuse the transcendence of Christianity and Judaism with the survival of democratic capitalism." But Novak does claim that "the actual practice of democratic capitalism is more consistent with the high aims of Judaism and Christianity than the practice of any other system." Novak's refusal to claim *too* much, while claiming much, for democratic capitalism indicates his impressive ability to combine an appreciation of the limits of every social system with a spirited commitment to the system he considers superior.

TO arrive at his understanding of democratic capitalism, Novak writes that he had to unlearn the "too many cliches" that prevent us from seeing what is around us. Novak's education was an ascent from practice to theory; through reflection upon "the common experiences within democratic capitalism," he came to see what

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its "implicit ideals" were and how they actually work. Thus Novak seeks in the first part of his book "to put into words the actual moral and theological presuppositions of democratic capitalism as it now exists . . . to describe the present system accurately, and to elicit from its actual practice the dynamic intentions and ideals already present within it," to "make its inarticulate wisdom articulate." Novak endorses Reinhold Niebuhr's suggestion that "the system in which we live is better than any theory about it," and sets out to articulate an "ideal" true to the reality of democratic capitalism.

This "ideal" is a whole consisting of three separate but related parts—a predominantly market economy, a liberal democratic polity, and a "moral-cultural system which is pluralistic and, in the largest sense, liberal." This last aspect, though perhaps the least formalized, seems the most important; Novak refers to it as the "moral-cultural base." Democratic capitalism is characterized by the differentiation of these three systems, or spheres of life, each with relatively autonomous institutions; their autonomy is supported by the pluralistic spirit that decisively distinguishes democratic capitalism from pre-liberal as well as from socialist societies.

Novak's understanding of pluralism goes beyond that of most political scientists. Pluralism is not simply a matter of distrust of "claims to special idealism, rationality, and moral insight," not merely a grudging recognition of and compromise with the self-interested and opinionated character of human beings. Rather, pluralism as a spirit, and as embodied in institutions, represents democratic capitalism's effort "to preserve the sphere of the person inviolate." Democratic capitalism "glories in divergence, dissent, and singularity," and the principles and institutions of pluralism are an attempt to achieve social cooperation while respecting these qualities. The procedures of pluralism make the pursuit of substantive goods possible, but in doing so "they themselves become substantive goods of a sort." Pluralism becomes a kind of civic faith, something more substantive than "interest-group jockeying," something less than the prior "specification of ends and means" that would be appropriate to a nonpluralistic, unitary vision of social life. Pluralism would be "too low a system for angels, [but] it seems not to be too high for humans as they are. It stretches them a little."

NOVAK'S understanding of democratic capitalism in general follows from his understanding of pluralism in particular. Democratic capitalism recognizes the limits of the virtue that can be expected of its citizens, and by building on "the doctrine of unintended consequences" manages—at least in the economic and political spheres—to push towards a free and just society through economic and political institutions (the free market, representative government) rather than by depending on the moral intentions of its citizens. Thus democratic capitalism "attains a highly moral outcome by placing less stress on moral purposes." But not *no* stress;

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for its use of systemic arrangements to supply (in part) the defect of moral intentions, does not obviate the fact that democratic capitalism depends "upon a high degree of civic virtue in its citizens (and upon an especially potent moral and cultural system separated from the state)." Indeed, "the system of moral and religious culture must instruct individuals in the ways of liberty and virtue." For though "the ethic of commerce furnishes a school of virtue favorable to democratic governance," commerce is ultimately insufficient on its own to promote virtue, and in fact the commercial virtues are insufficient to their own moral and intellectual defense. Though it is a mistake to think of the political and economic system as simply living off the moral-cultural system without contributing anything in the way of habituation to virtue in return, in the end the moral-cultural system is the key.

And in this system, Novak acknowledges, all is not well. The guardians of the spirit of democratic capitalism "have neither deciphered nor taught its spiritual wisdom. They have not loved their own culture." Our moral-cultural institutions do their crucial job less well than our political and economic institutions. At times Novak acknowledges that the moral and cultural life of man under democratic capitalism may be seriously lacking. More often he suggests that our intellectuals fail to perceive the moral and cultural qualities that do exist. Thus in his interesting discussion of community under democratic capitalism, Novak seems to be asserting, not simply that things could be as he outlines them, but that on the whole they *are*, albeit unperceived as such because ideological cliches obscure our everyday experience.

Novak challenges the common assertion that democratic capitalism destroys community. In fact, pluralistic societies develop their own forms of community, the community of free persons in voluntary association. Noting the need for tolerance and cooperation enforced by a pluralistic society and the "rich pattern of association in America," Novak reminds us that "just because individuals are not collectivized it does not follow that they are not communal." Novak claims that "an ethos of association, teamwork, and collaboration, oriented by tasks and goals, voluntarily entered into," characterizes democratic capitalism; and this, though not the only form of community, is a noble one, respecting as it does the singularity of each person while allowing for an intense, voluntary, and multiple communal life. The democratic capitalist ideal is communitarian, and so is democratic practice, though perhaps less than it could be if the ideal were better understood.

HOWEVER much our experience diverges from the ideal that he claims to have induced from our experience, Novak attempts to sketch for us the fundamental understanding animating the moral-cultural base of democratic capitalism. For democratic capitalism as a whole rests on "certain moral and cultural presuppositions about the nature of individuals and their communities." In-

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deed, "apart from certain specific views of human life and human hope, neither a democratic polity nor a market economy makes sense." One might say that a democratic capitalist political economy requires a democratic capitalist ethic, which in turn requires or implies what might be called a democratic capitalist metaphysics. What is this metaphysics of democratic capitalism, according to Novak?

Here Novak seems to waver between two fundamental points of view, which might be called, roughly, Christian existentialism and a sort of Christian Aristotelianism. Both points of view are very far from the "metaphysics" of those whom we usually think of as the founders of democratic capitalism, John Locke and David Hume and Adam Smith; and perhaps this felt need to rethink the philosophical foundations of democratic capitalism is more revealing than what seems to be Novak's own uncertainty. Of the two views of "human life and human hope" that color Novak's thought, Christian existentialism is more prominent. In a footnote Novak cites approvingly the comment of Bernard Murchland on "the close relationship between existentialism—the philosophy of self-making—and capitalism," and much of Novak's language about democratic capitalism has something of an existentialist flavor. According to Novak, "the genius of democratic capitalism is to serve brotherhood by recognizing that the most precious of all common goods is the individuality of each person," and democratic capitalism "makes the insight and choice of the human person the determining power of history." What is to guide that choice? Apparently nothing in particular, for it is the goal of capitalism to "break the chains of the mere struggle for subsistence, and to permit individual persons to 'find themselves,' indeed to define themselves through the interests they choose to make central to their lives."

This process of self-definition appears to be open-ended for the individuals involved, and for the system as well, which according to Novak is "a system intended to constitute a continuous revolution" and "capable of indefinite future transformation." There are not self-evident and unchanging truths in a "genuinely pluralistic society"; rather "at its spiritual core, there is an empty shrine. That shrine is left empty in the knowledge that no one word, image, or symbol is worthy of what all seek there. Its emptiness, therefore, represents the transcendence which is approached by free consciences from a virtually infinite number of directions." Contrary to Jefferson, for whom certain truths were at the core of a free society, and for whom enlightenment about those truths was the best support for freedom, Novak asserts that "it is because individuals are capable of the experience of nothingness—that is, able to raise questions about all schemes of community, order, purpose, and meaning, and able to choose in darkness—that individuals have inalienable rights." It is "respect for the common human wandering in darkness," not the possibility of enlightenment, that is at the heart of a free society.

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On the other hand, at times Novak speaks of virtue and the virtues in such a way that one would think the purpose of democratic capitalism is to permit and even encourage virtue, not merely to allow human beings to "work out such destiny as they judged themselves called to." In this Aristotelian vein Novak reminds us that self-government does not mean the self freely chooses to follow its passions, that self-government is opposed to "letting go." But it is also opposed to the defining oneself in darkness that an existentialist Novak celebrates. The emphasis on virtue and self-government is consistent with the view of the world as one of "emergent probability" that Novak discusses at some length. Novak takes the term from and bases his discussion on the work of the Catholic philosopher Bernard Lonergan; on Novak's account this is a view of a world in which nature provides fundamentally intelligible ends for man which we are free to strive to achieve. Such a world seems as different from a world in which one "experiences nothingness" as the freedom to pursue virtue is different from the freedom to "choose in darkness."

There is a tension between Novak's existentialism and his quasi-Aristotelianism; but his need to appeal to either is due to his dissatisfaction with the contemporary understanding of democratic capitalism which underlies its loss of spirit. Novak means by spirit both spiritedness and spirituality, and he resembles Solzhenitsyn, whom he discusses briefly, in believing that the loss of one is inextricably tied to the loss of the other. Novak of course differs from Solzhenitsyn on the severity and the cause of what Solzhenitsyn calls our "spiritual exhaustion." For Novak, the citizens of democratic capitalist regimes "do not in fact seem to be more greedy, grasping, selfish, acquisitive, or anarchic than citizens in traditional or in socialist societies"; in fact democratic capitalism properly understood is a suitable model for the rest of the world. For Solzhenitsyn, the West "such as it is today" could not be recommended as a model, and the West is as it is today because of, not despite, its adherence to its fundamental principles. The result of the working out of these principles is "a fact which cannot be disputed"—"the weakening of human beings in the West." Novak's book is very far from the simpleminded responses to Solzhenitsyn's speech which tended to confirm rather than refute his diagnosis. But it would be an exaggeration to say that Novak's defense of democratic capitalism, perceptive and powerful though it is, succeeds in silencing once and for all the haunting echoes of Solzhenitsyn's judgment.

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# Does Political Art Have a Future?

MARK LILLA

***Robert Phillipe:*** **Political Graphics: Art as a Weapon.** *Abbeville Press. 334 pp. $50.*

***Edward Lucie-Smith:*** **The Art of Caricature.** *Cornell University Press. 128 pp. $24.95.*

***Steven Heller, ed.:*** **Man Bites Man: Two Decades of Satiric Art.** *A&W Publishers. 224 pp. $35.*

On lower Fifth Avenue in Manhattan there are two odd bookshops which seem very out of place, even in New York. The first (China Books) is a propaganda outlet for the People's Republic of China; the other (Four Seasons) is one for the Soviet Union and East Bloc. What makes these stores peculiar is not the propaganda they freely distribute—New Yorkers are used to that by now—but the stunning political posters they stock.

The contrast between the images employed in the posters could not be more striking. On entering the Chinese shop you find yourself surrounded by a hundred grinning, cherubic Maos—Mao in the fields watching the harvest, Mao in the mill watching fabrics weaved, Mao on the factory floor telling jokes. The slogans on the posters translate awkwardly into English, robbing them of whatever inspirational value they may have in the original: "Be prepared at all times and be sure to destroy the enemy intruders!"; "Socialism advances in victory everywhere!"; "Resolutely support the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America!" Yet the colors are bright, the people are smiling, the children appear well-fed, and everything looks remarkably clean. More than once I have walked out of the store thinking pleasant thoughts about the PRC.

A couple of blocks up, at the Soviet store, the atmosphere is dingy, oppressive. There Soviet socialist realism still reigns supreme —the posters are mostly gray or brown (not even much red!), the characters are overly muscular and squat, nobody smiles. My favorite poster is a black-on-gray number which seems almost to bark its slogan at the reader: "*SOVIET FICTION GIVES AN AUTHENTIC PICTURE OF ALL ASPECTS OF SOVIET LIFE.*"

However effective or ineffective these state-produced posters are in eliciting support or dulling the imagination, they are vivid reminders that there are still people in the world who believe that art can be an effective weapon in winning "hearts and minds" in politics. That the artist no longer plays a central role in the politics of the West seems fairly clear (though, ironically, politics may have become more central to his art). Indeed, the only recognizable image to have a perceptible impact on recent politics has been of East European origin: the Polish workers "Solidarnosc" which appears

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on buttons, posters, bumper stickers, and t-shirts in this country.

The reasons for the decline of art in Western politics are complex, but three recent books on the subject make the outline of that decline much sharper. In *Political Graphics*, Robert Phillipe, director of historical research at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris, has produced what will surely become one of the most important reference works on the history of political graphic art. Edward Lucie-Smith's *The Art of Caricature* suffers much by comparison—it is very short, somewhat facile, and contains some misinformation—but nonetheless provides an outline of one traditional form of artistic political expression. Steven Heller, art director of the *New York Times Book Review*, makes no political or aesthetic pretensions in his finely produced collection of satiric cartoons, *Man Bites Man*; it stands rather as a record of the limitations under which "political art" has operated over the past twenty years.

PHILLIPE's task is a difficult one because, in effect, he must tell three histories: that of the technology of graphic production, another of politics, and yet another of changes in artistic style and imagination. In his introduction he misleads the reader into thinking that he will attempt some grand synthesis, declaring at one point that "the modern age began with the negation of uniqueness" and asking "can the language of political graphics be said to have its own cadences, rules, tropes, and syntax?"; but with his structuralist obligations out of the way he proceeds to give a readable account of how these three realms—technological, political, aesthetic—have come together over the past five centuries of political graphics.

What one labels "political graphics" was much easier to define five centuries ago than it is today. In the late 15th century the first crude political woodcuts appeared in Germany and France, breaking the monopoly on religious themes. Since in the early Renaissance the clergy and crown were difficult to distinguish politically, this transition is far from dramatic; indeed, woodcuts celebrating and criticizing political and religious leaders circulated simultaneously. Woodcuts were a "populist" form of expression because they were inexpensive to make and relatively easy to fashion, so a large number of prints depicting local political events and peasant life began to appear.

Engraving is a more difficult and expensive process, one far less accessible to political dissenters during this period. Perfected by Albrecht Dürer in Germany in the early 16th century, engravings generally depicted religious allegories, recorded historical events, or sang the praises of the current monarch. Both woodcuts and engravings were distributed by travelling print-sellers who carried their wares in pouches or rolls, strolling from town to town spreading news and satirical commentary.

The first great flowering of political graphics—that is, when graphics first had a discernable political impact—came during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. One widely circulated German

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allegory shows Martin Luther in prayer at Worms receiving his inspiration from the Trinity and a host of angels; another by Erhard Schön depicts Luther as a set of bagpipes being played by the devil. These religious-political themes set a sharp tone for many of the prints over the next century and a half: the persecution of Protestants by Mary Tudor, the campaigns against the Huguenots, the "glories" of Cardinal Richelieu, the "dangers" of the Jesuits.

FROM the mid-17th to mid-18th century, political life, especially in England, became more independent of religion, and this transformation seems also to have set political graphics on its own important course. Suddenly, there was a "public" whose "opinion" must be shaped; prints, therefore, became more partisan and contained political "legends" at the bottom, or "balloons" which allowed the characters to speak. Prints became inexpensive and were widely distributed (along with the first newspapers) and decorated the walls of many homes. Distinctions in the graphics of different European nations also became far more apparent: British prints were clearly more satirical, even farcical, while German, Italian, and especially French graphics reflected more bitterness and social hostility.

These national distinctions seem to elude Phillipe, making his treatment of the next 100 years (roughly 1750-1850) the weakest in his book. He keeps calling this the "revolutionary period," which clues the reader into why so many important British and American graphic artists are not examined at length: They simply are not "revolutionary" enough. Instead, Phillipe focusses on the French Revolution, the rise of the European bourgeoisie, Napoleon, and the age of Daumier and Goya. Lithography was developed at this time, allowing the artist to use subtle shading and fluid lines to produce more compelling images, which also makes us view the period as more revolutionary and bloody than the one preceding it. Graphics also began to appear regularly in newspapers and to reach a wider public, and the first two satirical reviews to feature graphics prominently, *Le Charivari* and *La Caricature*, were founded in France.

But British, and even American, politics were never revolutionary during this period. In Britain this was the satiric age of Hogarth, Rowlandson, Gillray, and Cruikshank; as Lucie-Smith's book makes quite clear, it was an age of biting political humor, not bitterness or fury. *Punch* was founded in 1841 billing itself as a "new *Charivari*," but the heavily political graphics of its early years never resembled continental work. New printing techniques reduced the price and increased the circulation of newspapers after the turn of the century, and most British graphics appeared in papers from that point on.

American printmaking also distinguished itself in this period. While very crude by European standards, American prints in the late-18th century make clear why ours was a "rebellion" and not a

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"revolution": The targets of the artist were always very specific—usually British officials—and humor was the most popular mode. This style came to maturity a little later in Thomas Nast, who became the most important and influential 19th-century graphic artist in America. Besides his stylistic innovations, he is most remembered for his active role in exposing the corruption of "Boss" Tweed and his Tammany Hall political machine in the early 1870's. Nast's caricatures of Tweed appeared regularly in *Harper's Weekly* (often several times in each issue) and readers would line up at newsstands every week to pick up the latest installment of Nast's attacks. Try as he might, Tweed could not touch Nast, and eventually fled the country, only to be arrested by Spanish police who recognized him from one of Nast's drawings! Here, then, is one example of how differently political graphics affected and reflected political culture in Europe and the U.S.: Daumier was jailed for his caricature of King Louis Phillipe in 1832 and strict laws censoring caricature soon followed, while Nast was treated as a national hero for "dethroning" Tweed.

THE period 1880-1930 was clearly the high point of political graphics, both in terms of artistic achievement and mass political influence. The stylistic innovations and influences are so numerous they are difficult to disentangle: the spreading influence of inexpensive photography and photographic images, the Art Nouveau style and mass production of political posters, German Expressionism and Italian Futurism, etc. (It is worth noting that while Phillipe spends an extraordinary amount of time carefully laying out the different trends in various countries and circles, Lucie-Smith, with his rather muddled definition of caricature, leaves this period almost entirely unexamined.)

Whatever the stylistic innovations of the time, it was the establishment of mass politics that really allowed political posters, prints, and cartoons to flourish in Europe and the United States. Cities were covered wih campaign posters, socialist organizing posters, World War I recruitment posters ("I Want YOU!"). Daily newspapers, partisan and establishment, ran cartoons regularly, and several weeklies and monthlies were founded which relied heavily on political graphics: In the U.S., *Puck*, *Life*, and *Judge* popularized political graphic commentary with typical American irony and satire, while in Germany the great socialist weekly *Simplicissimus* reached a circulation of 200,000 in the early 1920's by running the vituperative work of George Grosz along with more humorous drawings. It was an age of modern mass politics without the modern means of mass communication, giving political graphics a central place in Western political life which it never had—and may never have again.

The Soviet Union after the turn of the century is a special case, and an ominous one at that. As Western art historians are just discovering, the Russian avant garde was very lively and accomplished

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in the years before 1917, and since most of its artists were on the left they almost universally supported the Bolshevik revolution. Phillipe has reproduced some of their earlier posters, which are both moving and prescient. El Lissitsky's "Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge" is a highly abstract pro-Bolshevik poster designed in 1919 which shows a red triangle piercing a white circle against a pure black background. Vladimir Mayakovsky produced a series of Cubo-Futurist posters in the 1920's warning against the evils of Menshevism, and Dmitri Moor contributed a masterful expressionist poster, "Death to Capitalism throughout the World," showing a huge green dragon coiled around gigantic black and red smokestacks (predating similar images in Fritz Lang's movie *Metropolis*). Until the late 1920's Russian political graphic art was as aesthetically "progressive" as any in Europe; but by then the revolution was secure, and Soviet authorities had no use for free thinking artists. Socialist realism became the official graphic style, and many members of the Russian avant garde, having served their purpose, were disposed of.

BEGINNING with World War II, the political importance of posters, prints, and cartoons declined dramatically, as Phillipe's collection makes very clear. I am hard pressed to find one memorable poster or print from that war to match in emotive force those produced during World War I. Stylistically, they appear quite retrograde, even though photo-offset processes and other techniques had become ever more refined. Yet this may be the key to their inability to inspire: For the first time political graphic art took a back seat to other forms of political imagery, specifically newspaper and magazine photography, motion pictures, and the newsreels. These are the images one remembers of World War II, not those of the graphic designer, nor even of the painter or sculptor for that matter. As Phillipe notes, this shift affected the artists as well:

> The fact that the graphic artists themselves had the experience of cinema, photography, and the advertising world to draw on gave them a wider choice of materials, and greater independence from the figurative resources of painting with its historically stratified conventions.

Yet this new "freedom" for the graphic artist may have robbed him of both his role and purpose, and perhaps even of his audience. Once political graphics becomes essentially indistinguishable from the images of advertising, television, and movies, it no longer reserves for itself that unique ability to inspire or infuriate. In his introduction to the Heller collection, Tom Wolfe ruminates on the decline of satiric art over the past fifty years and finds this question of style the central one: "Paramount has been the fall from fashion—plunge is more like it—of realistic painting. It was not by chance that the great century of caricature, 1820-1920, was also the great century of 'literary' or vignette painting."

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To bury political graphics, or even to proclaim it moribund, may seem a bit premature. Did not the late 1960's and early 1970's produce a great number of political posters and caricatures in the U.S., Europe, and Latin America—anti-war posters, student posters, caricatures of Nixon, works on ecological and racial themes? What about the current crop of gifted political cartoonists: Ralph Steadman, Brad Holland, Edward Sorel, David Levine, Eugene Mihaesco? Do not many publications and organizations—primarily those on the left—use their work, and graphics in general, to much effect?

Work on political graphics *does* continue, especially by those on the left. (Why conservative political organizations and publications seem inherently unable to profit from graphics and design is an interesting subject.) But to maintain that the anti-war and "anti-imperialist" posters, anti-Nixon cartoons, and other graphic political images of the past twenty years have been central to our politics is to exaggerate. The images one recalls of Vietnam come from television, or the photo of a South Vietnamese officer shooting a suspected guerilla through the head; of the anti-war movement, one remembers the girl mourning the student shot at Kent State; of the civil rights marches, one thinks of the photograph of German shepherds biting demonstrators in Birmingham; and even of Nixon, we see him, defeated, standing in the doorway of the helicopter, waving to his staff as he leaves the White House for the last time.

Next to these powerful images, the political graphic artist today can only hope that his work confirms his viewers' convictions, or amuses them. We appreciate the ingenious accuracy of Levine's caricatures in the *New York Review of Books*, we nod our heads at Jules Feiffer's strip in the *Village Voice*, we chuckle at Oliphant and MacNelly. We clip out their work and pin it on office bulletin boards, or mail it to friends. Or maybe we buy expensive, well-produced collections of their graphics (one like Heller's) to put on the coffee table. But we no longer look to them to move us, persuade us, or otherwise help define our politics.

For over five hundred years the graphic arts helped to shape the politics of Europe, especially of the continent; in the last fifty they have become peripheral, supplanted in large part by photographic images of the mass media. These past fifty years have seen a similar transformation in the United States, though one cannot help but be struck in reading Phillipe's book by how different our previous 150 years were from the same period in Europe. Reflected in the prints, posters, and cartoons is a nation at peace with itself, one sharing a certain unspoken political consensus on essential matters, a consensus which leaves enough room for biting satire without a loss of humor. Rarely have American graphics been thoroughly vicious. After the turn of the century there were three socialist magazines—Max Eastman's *Masses* (1911-17), its suc-

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cessor the *Liberator* (1918-24), and *Americana* (1930's)—that tried to import the graphic invectives which filled the pages of European magazines like *Simplicissimus*, but these hostile images fell flat, never taking root in American soil, and these magazines suffered the same fate as the parties that produced them. Could it be that the answer to the oft-repeated question, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?," might also clue us in to why there has never been revolutionary political graphic art here either?

Of course, even if one is persuaded of "American exceptionalism" in the political graphic arts, one need not see that as a good thing. Harold Rosenberg, for one, lamented the lack of individual expression among American graphic artists, especially after World War II. In his essay "The Politics of Art," he criticized American "institutional artists" and "sedentary audiences," and warned that:

> . . . the social sciences are replacing art as a means for transmitting political ideas and influences, as they are replacing intuition and common sense as a means of reaching decisions. Art as a political weapon is, like other social powers, taken out of the hands of the individual and made part of a collectively controlled apparatus.[1]

One might even go so far as to judge polities by the works of political art they produce. Lawrence Weschler, in a recent issue of *ARTFORUM*, seems to take this aesthetic view of politics to the extreme in an otherwise excellent essay on the history of the "Solidarnosc" logo. He compares the universal observance of "labor days" and memorial holidays in Poland to our corruption of these similar holidays into "three-day weekends" in the United States; he also contrasts the beauty of the "Solidarnosc" posters (apparently produced at great risk in Poland) to the banal placards produced by American labor unions for the "Solidarity Day" rally in Washington in 1981. One cannot disagree with his aesthetic judgments, but his political conclusions are troublesome:

> The authority of political art, finally, exists at best in proportion to the politics it advances. In order to work, political images have to command authority, but they can only realize the authority and authenticity of the political context out of which they arise. They cannot endow empty politics with vitality; and empty politics will drain them of their own vitality. Strong politics allow for strong images, and vice versa.[2]

"Strong politics"—whatever Weschler means by that curious phrase—can be aesthetically pleasing, I suppose, but they can also be quite dangerous. In Poland today, as in much of Europe throughout history, the political artist must keep one step ahead of the law, risking his life whenever he takes pen in hand. In the United States today the politician is flattered, not infuriated, if a political cartoon-

[1] Harold Rosenberg, "The Politics of Art," *The Anxious Object*. (New York: Macmillan, 1964) p. 219.
[2] Lawrence Weschler, "Solidarnosc," *ARTFORUM*, February 1982, p. 40.

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ist chooses him for caricature; he will ask for the original, not try to jail the artist.

Borges writes that "censorship is the mother of metaphor," and the contemporary writings of Solzhenitsyn, Brodsky, and Milosz, to name just a few, confirm his aphorism. Yet out of some perverse aestheticism do we then seek censorship in pursuit of great metaphorical writing or art? Of course not. The history of European political graphic art is fascinating, inspiring, in some ways even enticing, but it reflects a bloody and dangerous history. If it takes the politics of Warsaw to produce inspired graphic images today, on the whole I'd rather be in Philadelphia.

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## When Do Parents Grow Up?

RACHEL M. FLICK

***Sam Janus:* The Death of Innocence.** *Morrow. 320 pp. $12.95*

***David Elkind:* The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon.** *Addison-Wesley Press. 224 pp. $10.95*

***Sar A. Levitan and Richard S. Belous:* What's Happening to the American Family?** *Johns Hopkins University Press. 216 pp. $16.50.*

***Betty Friedan:* The Second Stage.** *Summit Books. 320 pp. $14.95*

A GROWING number of writers is calling our attention to the fact that children today seem to be very confused and are unduly inclined to delinquency, suicide, and drugs. A somewhat smaller number, however, has been willing to assert that you really cannot understand kids without looking at their parents. It is frequently noted that adults today are rootless—cut off from the religious and civic traditions that used to anchor them. It is conceded that Americans are adrift and afraid, and lack the sense of place and purpose that *their* parents had; although many Americans have already reproduced themselves, they still claim not to know who their "selves" are. Surprisingly few writers, however, ask what we should expect of the children of such people.

Four popularly written books published in the past year affirm the thesis that our messed-up kids are the inevitable result of our messed-up parents. Two of them do so expressly; these two are written by child therapists and are specifically about—and on behalf of—our children. The two remaining books, which are about adults, corroborate the thesis indirectly, and, it seems, against their wills. Despite a laborious and convoluted effort to demonstrate just the opposite, they describe a nation of malcontents—drifting, unhappy, and in no condition to bring up children.

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SAM JANUS, in his thoughtful book *The Death of Innocence,* presents to his readers the children of some of the most disturbed and pernicious of these parents: the sexually exploitative. Alarmingly, he finds their children everywhere. Although there have always been parents who degraded children, they used to be concentrated on the margin of society. While it was still abuse—and still wretched—at least it was considered pathological. Now, however, Janus tells us that these abusers are members of the white middle class, the arbiters of our national standards and mores. The problem has become mainstream.

How are children responding to this? Janus is especially concerned about extreme responses such as early promiscuity and pregnancy, incest, child prostitution, and running away from home, and he has shocking numbers on their steady increase. But there are less obvious consequences as well. He points to a strong cynicism even among non-delinquent children. Surveys that he has conducted of children and adolescents reveal their extraordinary interest in money as well as in sex: "Some idealism has been replaced by the need for immediate material gratification." And they are cynical about love. By adolescence "an idealism about having children, about building a family, is missing."

Janus thinks these children the victims of "the eroticization of childhood," a process abetted both in popular culture and by parents in their own homes. "Post-Freudian child-rearing," he writes, "has abandoned the latency period," leaving children to go from babyhood straight to puberty. The prevailing belief is that "any sex is better than none, and that you can't have too much of a good thing or start it too soon."

Yet the latency period, as used to be widely understood, serves a crucial function. It allows a child to do other things and grow in other ways, and to build up in a sheltered atmosphere the personality strength necessary to give and accept adult love later on. Janus points out that this period is a peculiarly American dream, "evoking poignant nostalgia" in later life. He also speculates that the latency period served to protect a child from sexual demands from without: "The belief that children were ignorant of and immune to sexual feelings has acted as a powerful deterrent against approaches by adults."

In other words, our children have changed because our opinion of what they are has changed, and our new vision of them eloquently bespeaks what is different in us. Parental vision is more self-centered now—we are unable to see children as *they* are, but can only attribute to them our own needs and preoccupations. It is this self-centeredness that is the crux of the eroticization problem.

DAVID ELKIND, in *The Hurried Child,* is concerned with a broader category of abuse, and he discusses it in different terms, but he too finds its source in selfishness or, as he calls it, "parental ego need."

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*The Hurried Child* is interesting, although it is much more superficial than Janus's book. Elkind is interested not just in the premature introduction of children to the erotic life but in their being hurried out of childhood in general. He describes what he calls the "hurried child":

> Stressed by the fear of failure—of not achieving fast enough or high enough. . . . Hurried children are forced to take on the physical, psychological, and social trappings of adulthood before they are prepared to deal with them.

Elkind sees this hurrying in society at large—in the media, in children's literature, and in the schools—but most of all he sees it in the family. And he regards it as abusive to the extent that it has its origins not in legitimate family need but in the ego needs of the parent.

Elkind's theory of family life is that there is an assumed contract between parents and children according to which each has firm and explicit obligations to the other. Children cannot articulate this contract, he believes, but they know that it is there and they know when their parents have broken it. The hurrying parent breaks this contract. Selfishly, he either unloads his own responsibilities on his child in an effort to enlist his child's "aid in carrying life's load," or he tries to live through his child's achievements.

Elkind attributes this parental selfishness to parental stress. He believes that parents "stress" their children because they themselves are stressed and people under stress are always self-centered. And they are stressed, he writes, because the world is difficult: "Parents live in a pressure-cooker of competing demands." They are professionally insecure—depressed about their jobs because theirs is a dog-eat-dog, zero-sum world. (He hypothesizes, for example, that there is a high correlation between job dissatisfaction and concern with one's children's success in sports.)

But can the world today really be any more "zero-sum" than it always has been? Is it true that life is more difficult now than it was before? Elkind does not understand what Janus sees so clearly: If life is more difficult today it is not because its demands are greater, it is because certain supports are gone. More and more people are separated from their religious traditions and no longer regard as authoritative the family forms and conventions with which they were reared. Adults today are not burdened with stronger stresses than were their parents, there is just nothing to help them stand up to and untangle the stresses they do face. It is from this *adult* isolation that the family—and especially its children—now suffers.

THAT the American family is footloose—and the extent to which it is suffering for it—is also clearly revealed by Levitan's and Belous's *What's Happening to the American Family?*, despite the authors' best efforts to conceal this situation. Levitan and Belous

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assert in their first and last chapters that all is well with the family, but in between they present reason after reason for concluding the opposite. Their's is a book of statistics, gleaned from a wide assortment of private and governmental research and reassembled in a readable format. They present the criticisms and questions of some of the best of those thinkers who fear for the future of the family, and they offer us the data on the family's decline that are by now so familiar—data on skyrocketing divorce, declining fertility, and increasing out-of-wedlock births—yet they read these grim materials in an astonishingly blithe way.

We learn, for instance, that "40% of all marriages can be expected to end in divorce," yet the authors cheerily remind us that, on the other hand, divorce rates are *not* progressing geometrically. They tell us that only 67.5 percent of children under 18 are still living with their natural parents, and then express satisfaction that everyone does not predict that this figure will go up (the notion that "escalating numbers of children will be involved in divorce is not supported by recent data"). "It's a case," they observe, "of focusing on how much of the glass is empty and how much is full." They are optimistic and take comfort in the stabilization of some horrendous statistics.

Belous and Levitan also take comfort—in fact, they find their strongest reassurance—in people's continuing desire to live in families. "Family life and marriage," they write, "are still widely considered critical to many aspects of personal stability and development." It is from this observation that their book derives its central idea: The family is good and therefore it will endure; what looks to us like degeneration is actually evolution.

Unfortunately, their exposition of this idea—which undoubtedly contains some truth—ignores one point, and this omission prevents them from understanding the fundamental motive that is altering American family life. Levitan and Belous do not acknowledge the inherently limited number of forms which the family can take and still remain "the family," achieving the same goods that it traditionally exists to achieve. No institution can take *any* form and still remain the same institution. Some changes in form are not evolution but rejection of the institution—or, at least, of those qualities that made it worth having in the first place. In fact, many Americans today are not acting so as to give themselves new "kinds of families," they are acting so as to get out of the family, out of all of the limitations and frustrations that it inevitably entails.

The authors' refusal to recognize the inherent limits of the form is best seen in their attitude toward divorce. "Granted," they write, "that Americans have not given up on the institution of marriage, it does not follow that men and women are still willing to remain tied down with the same partner till they meet their Maker." But obviously, a person—or a society—cannot embrace both the idea of marriage and the "trading of partners" at the same time. Belous and Levitan stare decay in the face and herald evolution.

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This continues throughout the book: The authors repeatedly point out that Americans are conducting their family lives badly, and then assert that this is okay. They tell us, for example, that there has always been unhappiness with the family and a desire to make it better, and that the only difference today is that this discontent is out in the open. And again, when they point out that the new family forms are not proving as financially self-sufficient as were the traditional forms, they quote Tennessee Williams's wretched Blanche DuBois on depending on the "kindness of strangers," and conclude that the public policy ought not to encourage one form of the family over another, but should stand ready to pay the bills for all alike.

BETTY FRIEDAN, in her recent and much discussed book *The Second Stage*, follows the same pattern: She shows us distress, asks a lot of good questions about it, and skirts the obvious explanations, suggesting instead that this distress is a sign of evolution toward new and, *ipso facto*, necessary forms.

Friedan has discovered that traditional male and female virtues differ, and that as women move into the male world they feel themselves losing their old feminine qualities, missing them, and wanting them back. Women then feel guilty about their reluctance to give up their old roles and are torn from one side by self-hate and from the other by rebellion against the new. Her solution to this is twofold. First, it is institutional: Some structural changes should occur in both homes and communities to overcome the logistical problems of working women. Second, it is a role change for men: The male world should begin to emulate feminine virtue in task, style, and outlook. The women's movement and "American democracy itself," she writes, have "come to the end of a stage—the last stage for a certain political mode, a style of political leadership that has been defined as 'masculine.'" In short, men should change their characters, and institutions should adjust to the change.

The institution that she is most interested in changing is the family. Friedan sings the praises of the traditional family—wife, husband, their children—but it is not really what she is after. She explains:

> None of us can depend throughout our new long lives on that old nuclear family to meet our needs for nurture, love and support, but all of us still have those needs. The answer is not to deny them, but to recognize that equality makes it possible, and necessary, for *new* kinds of family. The answer is to recognize, strengthen, or create new family forms that can sustain us now—and that will change, as our own needs change, over time.

She tells us that her own "extended family of choice" consists of an assortment of kin and close friends with whom she feels a long and strong bond, and with some of whom she has shared a group home on Long Island. She wants to "acknowledge the diversity of

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the families people live in now." She notes the American Home Economics Association's new definition of the family: "Two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have commitments to one another over time. The family is that climate that one 'comes home to', and it is this network of sharing and commitments that most accurately describes the family unit, regardless of blood, legal ties, adoption, or marriage."

She will not see, however, that unsupported by blood or law these ties simply do not last over time in any but a few, quite exceptional cases. She will not acknowledge what Levitan's and Belous's book reveals: how often the renouncement of these ties really amounts to a desire *not* to be bound too tightly.

Above all, Friedan does not see the extent to which the idea of a "chosen" family negates what family is. A critical, defining characteristic of the family is that it is *given*. It is precisely in this givenness that the value and purpose of the family lies; you cannot change that and still call it the family, any more than you can universalize divorce and still call marriage marriage. The American Home Economics Association, quoted above, looks at what people *do* for each other and decides whether to call them family; their actions designate their relationship. Traditionally, by contrast, people are called family according to what they *are* to each other, like it or not, and the relationship designates their obligations—what actions they must take for each other.

IRONICALLY, then, those who abandon the family to search for their own identities abandon an institution that may "understand" them—and their far-reaching needs—far better than they do themselves. Friedan does not see this. She is firmly persuaded that economic, logistical, and technological changes have made the family obsolete. She thinks its necessity vanished when both husband and wife found employment outside the home, and that now both are free to go find a "new human wholeness." She does not see that we need to seek not any elusive "wholeness" but simply an anchor. Traditional families have been our anchors before, balancing with rare skill a number of otherwise explosive things. Anchoring us is a complicated and delicate job and the institution that does it for us cannot casually be discarded. The truth is that in trying to replace that institution, for whatever reason we have done so, we have simply pushed ourselves, and perhaps more importantly, our children, out to sea.

It is arguably our right to cast ourselves adrift; but to take our children with us is unarguably not. It is politically and morally necessary that children's needs override those of adults. And the evidence from Janus, from Elkind, and from common sense is clear: Children need stable families. Stable families require grown-up parents, however, and of these it appears we do not have many.

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# War as a Whole

ELIOT A. COHEN

***Thomas E. Etzold:*** **Defense or Delusion? America's Military in the 1980's.** *Harper & Row. 259 pp. $14.95.*

***Mary Kaldor:*** **The Baroque Arsenal.** *Hill and Wang. 294 pp. $14.95.*

***Jacques S. Gansler:*** **The Defense Industry.** *M.I.T. Press. 346 pp. $9.95 paper.*

***Helen Rogan:*** **Mixed Company: Women in the Modern Army.** *G. P. Putnam's Sons. 333 pp. $14.95.*

***Martin Binkin and Irene Kyriakopoulos:*** **Paying the Modern Military.** *Brookings Institution. 84 pp. $3.95.*

Books on defense policy are frequently disappointing. For example, of these five, not one can be recommended to the general reader, and only two to the specialist (and even those with reservations). Why this is the case is a question worth pondering. Despite the intelligence and application of the authors, these books are uniformly narrow and sterile. The problems that afflict all of these books afflict writing about defense issues generally: the failure to consider war as a whole and the failure to understand it as something unique. The fault lies both in the failure of writers to understand the phenomenon they are dealing with and in the complexity of the phenomenon itself.

The chant of the jingo has it that,

> We don't want to fight,
> But by jingo if we do,
> We've got the ships,
> We've got the men,
> We've got the money, too.

It is a revealing couplet, because most American writers today, like the jingo they profess to abhor, believe that preparation for war consists solely in the purchase of weapons and men. Alliance and domestic politics, grand strategy and tactical doctrine, organization and deployment receive scant attention from them. Thus, the blurb to Thomas H. Etzold's *Defense or Delusion?* lists "eleven striking facts," such as that a B-52 consumes about $6000 worth of fuel per hour of flight.

Etzold, a professor of strategy at the U.S. Naval War College, begins with a familiar and misleading set of curiously uninformative facts such as the one mentioned above. He tells us, for example, that a $2.7 million tank can be knocked out by a $5000 antitank missile. One might as well say that a master sergeant, who has cost his country several hundred thousand dollars to train, equip, and support, can be killed by a bullet costing thirty cents.

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More alarming is the book's lack of historical learning, despite the author's position at what is, or ought to be, one of our foremost institutions of war study. He asserts, for example, that America's ideals, "passed down from founding philosophers, tell the American people that it is immoral to rely on violence in pursuit of democratic purposes." This betrays not only ignorance of the Founders' writings, but a failure to recall that they did, after all, fight a protracted war against Great Britain, as well as several sharp actions against Indians, French revolutionaries, and Barbary pirates. Like virtually every other writer on this subject, Professor Etzold gives scant attention to the numerous and intricate connections between America's political and military institutions.

Professor Etzold assures us that "from 1949 to about 1960 NATO strategy was neither complex nor strenuous," which is untrue not only on the face of it, but at a deeper level as well. Etzold unnaturally divorces strategy from politics—how else could he gloss over the tumult of German rearmament, French and British decolonization (with the associated political and military consequences), and the numerous problems associated with the placement of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe during the 1950's? The view Professor Etzold seems to hold is that our military dilemmas are unprecedented because of changes in weapons technology and the reactions of Americans to the Vietnam war. According to this view there is no need to turn to prolonged historical study or subtle political analysis; for his purpose, history begins in 1965.

The book does not begin, as it ought, with a study of America's position in the world, the fundamentals of our alliances, the nature of friends and likely foes. Rather, it wades immediately into pools of "facts" and the minutiae of cost, weapon characteristics and reenlistment rates. To judge by the footnotes, its sources are *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and a few specialized magazines such as *Aviation Week* and *Space Technology*.

If professors of strategy turn out such superficial guides to American defense policy, what better can we expect from journalists? Mary Kaldor's *The Baroque Arsenal* extrapolates from "facts" such as those that Etzold sprinkles throughout his book, and comes to the by now familiar conclusion that American armaments are not merely excessively complicated and costly, but downright useless. Like many other excessively moralistic critics of the defense industry ("we have to create a society that does not need armaments") she betrays a fascination with the gadgetry of war which, in someone with different politics, would be considered downright unhealthy. Like many other partisans of a "cheap but effective" defense, she is enthralled by Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs—"smart" missiles or bombs). She ignores the "baroqueness" of the advanced electronic technology required by such missiles. Moreover, she apparently does not know that similarly extravagant claims were made in their time for dive bombers and plain anti-tank

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guns. Unimpeded by a knowledge of military and weapons history —knowledge which would induce a salutary caution—she makes a case against any and all big, costly, complicated weapons.

It is an old phenomenon, this search for cheap weapons which are only to be used defensively (i.e., virtuously). From the larger point of view, however, the notion of a defensive weapon is an absurdity, since one of the oldest gambits in war is the strategic offensive (e.g., the surprise Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal in 1973) combined with a tactical defensive (e.g., Egyptian use of wire-guided antitank missiles to stop the initial Israeli counter-attacks).

It is instructive to recall a disastrous American experiment with cheap, simple, defensive weapons. During the early 1800's President Jefferson put aside America's few fine 44-gun frigates (larger and more expensive than their foreign counterparts) and ordered in their stead several hundred cheap gunboats which did not require nearly as much skill to handle and had the merit of being purely defensive. When the War of 1812 broke out, the British Navy easily disposed of the few gunboats that dared challenge their blockade of American ports. One reason for the relatively favorable peace agreement in 1815 was American construction of even larger ships of the line (19th-century battleships) than those in the blockading squadrons. Most of our major naval victories in that war were won by those expensive super-frigates Jefferson seems to have thought we could do without.

"Many people who read this book will miss a discussion of national security, of strategy and tactics," Kaldor writes, and she is correct. Her neglect of the military context of weapons acquisition is astonishing. Would she write a book calling the manufacturers of flutes incompetents without a word on how those instruments sound or how musicians play them? Would she deride the widespread use of modern flutes by orchestras and recommended their replacement with pennywhistles without asking about the consequences for symphonic music?

A far more professional and rewarding book is Jacques S. Gansler's *The Defense Industry*, written by a long-time defense official. It is crammed with tables and graphs, and is clearly, if not attractively, written. He summarizes his argument as follows: "The free-market system is not operating to achieve economically efficient or strategically responsive behavior in the area frequently referred to as the "military-industrial complex.'" Gansler describes well the structure of a haphazardly organized defense industry hampered by governmental micro-regulation.

Gansler's central point is that a simple-minded reliance on the free market for weapons production is both absurd and dangerous. This is not a new observation—in *The Wealth of Nations* Adam Smith himself supported mercantilist practices necessary to national defense—but it is one which Gansler backs with extensive docu-

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mentation. He does not favor the nationalization of the defense industry, but he does desire a planned defense industry. Gansler's recommendations, such as the separation of research and development from production, and various measures for the integration of civilian and military industry, seem sensible.

Unfortunately, Gansler merely repeats, without explanation, the usual complaints about excessively expensive and complicated military technology. He presents the usual "gee-whiz" graph showing the increase in the cost of modern weapons compared with those of World War II without pausing to discuss such factors as the cost of comparable Soviet equipment, the military advantages of expensive devices (laser range finders, for example, which enable tank gunners to score a hit on their first shot), or the cost of a weapon relative to GNP. After all, one should compare a weapon's cost with that of its predecessor not in absolute terms (constant dollars) but in relative terms, i.e., by its cost relative to the size of the economy. Presumably a larger economy can support more expensive weapons.

But the real deficiency in Gansler's argument can be found in his revealing complaint that "policymakers" have not even been able to decide on what possible wars they are preparing for." It is the essence of America's geopolitical problem that her planners cannot know what kinds of wars are ahead, or rather, that they must prepare for many different kinds of war. The Israelis know that they will fight their Arab neighbors in the rocky deserts of the Levant; the Germans know they will have to fend off Soviet armored divisions in urbanized Central Europe; the Moroccans know they must cope with guerrillas and Algerians in the Sahara. The United States, however, might have to fight Vietnamese, Koreans, Iranians, or Russians; it might have to fight infantry wars in the jungles or the mountains, or armored battles in the desert or the north German plain. Because of the enormous diversity of possible enemies, climate, and terrain that its troops might have to cope with, the United States must strive to create an armed forces that can operate in all kinds of conditions. Small wonder that our military equipment is built to extraordinary and costly specifications, for who can tell whether a manpack radio set will be used in a steamy Asian rice paddy, in an Arabian sandstorm, or a Norwegian blizzard? Small wonder, too, that we build extremely capable but expensive weapons such as the F-15 fighter-bomber. The United States will probably have to fight the opening battles of a campaign at the end of a long logistical line: What weapons it can deploy had best be far more capable, pound for pound, than those of its enemies.

Like Etzold, Gansler fails to raise, let alone grapple with, the fundamental defense dilemmas created by America's geographical position and her alliance structure. This by no means deprives his study of its usefulness, but it does cripple it. This is unfortunate, because his is one of the more thorough and sober investigations of our defense industry; his recommendation that government attempt

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to manage the defense industry broadly rather than in detail should be heeded.

WEAPONS and money make up part of the defense industry; what of the men, or rather, the men and the women? Helen Rogan's *Mixed Company* is a potpourri of reporting, feminist ideology, and wishful thinking on military personnel. While observing women in basic training and at West Point she evidently saw (and, to her credit, put on paper) the ways in which the American armed forces pretend to train women for war and do not; the ways, in other words, in which the profound physiological and psychological differences between the sexes continue to make women something less than average soldiers. (For example, she reports the methods used to shield women from rougher types of hand to hand combat training, including boxing, at West Point.)

Her feminism will not allow her to admit that women are simply not cut out to be soldiers, and she raids history to find evidence to support her views. She makes great play of Israel's experiment with female soldiers in 1948. She does not, however, discuss Israeli policy since then—the exclusion of women from all combat or combat-related jobs. Nor does she take seriously the fact that no major army in the world, save the American, now puts women in combat-type units (e.g., signal corps detachments) that will fight in the front line. At the end, however, she subverts her argument by calling for the transformation of the Army from a fighting outfit into a kind of emergency National Park Service, devoted to disaster relief and other good works. By doing this she tacitly acknowledges that women do not like and are not suited for the brutality and rigors of war. Her solution is not to say that women should have a drastically limited role in war, but to pretend that the Army does not have to spend its time preparing for it.

This belief—that armies are or ought to be social institutions whose function need not center on preparation for war—is not merely erroneous but dangerous. An army that has not prepared all its members for the peculiar spiritual and physical demands of war, the fear and pain that pervade it, will dissolve into a panicked mob. American armies in the past—the forces that clashed at the first battle of Bull Run, for example—did not dissolve because their members were, individually speaking, cowards; their units disintegrated because they had not been knit together by the peculiar bonds of habit and sentiment that constitute military discipline and military morale.

Rogan's polemical journalism fails to grasp this, and so does the work of such competent policy analysts as Martin Binkin and Irene Kyriakopoulos of the Brookings Institution. Their *Paying the Modern Military* suggests that the armed forces should adopt a "rational" system of paying people for their technical expertise. In particular, they think that soldiers should be paid by grade (i.e., by what they do) not rank, and that it is perfectly acceptable to

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pay non-combat specialists more than combat soldiers. They may be right, if their aim is solely to retain technicians who might otherwise leave the service, but what is disturbing is their failure to raise the military implications of their proposals. How does one maintain the authority of a sergeant if the men working under him get paid more than he? How will one recruit sergeants—the backbone of any army—if their pay is less than that of their subordinates? How can the Army maintain the quality and prestige of the average infantryman if his paycheck tells him that he is less important to the Army than an automotive mechanic? Such "reforms," like the transformation of the PX into a department store that charges almost as much as its civilian counterparts, undermine the military community in subtle but profound ways. They may, to repeat, be necessary, but at least their proponents should indicate that they know what the implications of their proposals are.

War is a whole. It is, therefore, almost always futile to try to saw off a chunk of defense policy, be it weapons acquisition, manpower policy, or strategic doctrine, and examine it in isolation. One must recognize that foreign policy, domestic politics, strategy, tactics, administration, technology, and the psychology of the individual soldier all react upon one another. One cannot design a system of conscription, for example, without deciding whether the armed forces should prepare primarily for low-intensity wars in the Third World or all-out warfare in Central Europe. One cannot scoff at the renovation of battleships and the construction of giant aircraft carriers such as the USS *Nimitz* without considering the relative likelihoods of attacking Soviet submarines in the North Atlantic or fighting, for example, the Libyan armed forces in the Mediterranean. (For the former a large number of small, antisubmarine warfare aircraft carriers might be best; for the latter, the U.S. needs a vessel capable of defeating and punishing remote Third World enemies equipped with modern weaponry.)

Similarly, one cannot make foreign policy choices—a decision to threaten the use of force in the upper Persian Gulf, for example—without understanding the logistical requirements of armored forces operating thousands of miles from home, or the likely outcome of a clash between lightly armed paratroopers and marines, on the one side, and Soviet or Iraqi tank divisions, on the other. Clausewitz put it simply:

> In war more than in any other subject we must begin by looking at the nature of the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and the whole must always be thought of together.[1]

As he said of war itself, this is a seemingly straightforward task which, in practice, is enormously difficult.

The obstacle to sound defense policy is thus as much a problem

[1] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Book I, Chapter 1).

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of conceptualization as it is of execution or implementation. The tendency of many writers is to ascribe America's difficulties to perverse organizational behavior—an intrinsic bias of the armed forces bureaucracies towards the latest, fanciest hardware, in one case, a fatal penchant on the part of Congress for meddling in the minutae of defense planning, in another. But although there is a measure of truth in such a line of interpretation, it is inadequate alone because it underestimates the difficulty of *knowing* what should be done. Only one Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, ever convinced himself and others that he possessed the analytical tools to master American defense policy, and his tenure was marked by the complete failure of these analytical tools in war. This failure stemmed in large part from the application of quantitative techniques—summed up in the term "systems analysis" —suited to business but not to war. McNamara believed that defense policy required no special knowledge, that war preparation had no special rules. But war *is* unique, and its uniqueness must be appreciated if we are to understand it.

War is relatively rare, hence it is hard to foresee its requirements. An English general once likened preparation for it to the construction of a national railroad network under the proviso that no locomotives could be run, no loads carried over the tracks, except on an occasion, randomly chosen, once every twenty years. In addition, war imposes extraordinary physical and psychological pressures on those who participate in it, and at every level of command. Soldiers succumb to bullets and bombs, their generals to heart attacks and nervous collapse. To meet these unique demands the military world has evolved habits and practices (such as the salute or the exclusion of women from battle) to which it wisely adheres without much thought. Subconsciously, however, most soldiers know that this is the case because they belong to specialized organizations capable of performing extremely unusual tasks.

To understand the uniqueness of war a wide and deep knowledge of its history is needed, for wars resemble one another far more than they do anything else. It is not enough to have a small stock of analogies or historical tidbits: Students of war, be they social scientists or bureaucrats, journalists or politicians, must immerse themselves in military history. Having done so, it will be difficult if not impossible for them to accept uncritically such popular and misleading dichotomies as "maneuver versus attrition" warfare, or "managerial versus gladiatorial" leadership.

In addition, those of us who are not combat veterans need to cultivate an imaginative understanding of the physiognomy of battle, for it is battle which defines the nature of war. In Clausewitz's words, "Fighting is the central military act; all other activities merely support it." Thus, every defense measure—pay policy, weapons purchases, manpower policy—must be measured against the yardstick of battlefield effectiveness, not administrative efficiency. This

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too seems like a simple enough injunction, and it too is extremely difficult in practice, for combat assumes many different forms. Occasionally, even the veteran must be able to put aside his experiences to understand battle waged in a different time and place, against different opponents and with the aid of different weapons.

As these books demonstrate, America's material armories might be filled with lethal weapons and the men to use them, but our intellectual arsenals are in a state of disrepair. The United States needs learned and productive civilian and military students of war. Such experts are needed to mold and implement policy, to be sure, but also to foster a wider understanding of the realities of war and the difficulties of preparing for it. They are needed because, as these books show, it is perilous to make pronouncements about war without studying it.

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# Fission Decisions

ROGER STARR

***David Okrent:*** **Nuclear Regulatory Safety.** *University of Wisconsin Press. 370 pp. $29.50.*

DAVID OKRENT, a professor in the School of Engineering at UCLA, has been a member of the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Safety longer than anyone else. That Committee advises the Nuclear Regulatory Commission on safety matters and reviews the licensing process of each nuclear power plant before final action is taken by the Commission. The committee, originally an informal body set up by the old Atomic Energy Commission, was established officially by Congress in 1957. It has 15 members appointed by the NRC, and its chairmanship rotates among the members annually. It is at the heart of the system for applying nuclear fission to the production of electricity in the United States, and Professor Okrent's book—consisting almost entirely of separate discussions of specific design, site selection, and safety criteria problems that came up in the course of licensing nuclear power plants in California, New Jersey, Connecticut, New York, and other states—illuminates slowly but thoroughly the hard problems posed by the development of a new technology as complicated, useful, hazardous, controversial, and important as nuclear energy.

When one thinks of the centuries that builders and structural engineers, and a host of affiliated artisans and professionals, have needed to develop a still inadequate set of standards for constructing buildings, it becomes scarcely credible that in the 37 years

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since Hiroshima an effective working technology for nuclear power could emerge at the same time as a system for regulating its development. The nuclear power plant is, of course, fundamentally a steam-powered, turbine-driven electric generating station. That part of its design has evolved over more than 100 years of study, trial and error, and experience. Using fission heat to make the steam, however, was entirely unprecedented. Professor Okrent demonstrates how his committee, composed of experts in several of the engineering areas involved, struggled to define what they did not know. He also stresses what they need to know, and do not yet, if judgments about safety requirements are to become standardized and routine.

WHAT effect, if any, would continuing neutron bombardment have on the ductility of the steel from which the reactor shell is made? What would be the effect of hitting a molten reactor core with jets of water and how explosive a response would follow? Would the containment building, with its heavy concrete walls and floor, be strong enough to withstand the immense heat of core melt-down if such an accident took place in one of the new generation of enlarged plants that began applying for approval in the second half of the 1960's? How close to a densely populated area could one of the new, larger reactors reasonably be located? What provision can be made by extra-heavy construction designs to withstand possible earthquake shocks, and what magnitude of earthquake should one try to protect against? None of these questions, Professor Okrent says, can be answered on the basis of past experiments or trial and error. The Advisory Committee on Nuclear Safety was apparently asking itself these and other similar questions even while the regulatory staff of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was actually reviewing the plans and site selection information provided by power companies and public bodies like T.V.A. that were considering the installation of nuclear electric generating stations.

Professor Okrent presumably picked out for his book engineering questions that were of interest to him, but it is easy enough for the reader to generalize with some assurance that other areas of design were similarly important to other members of the Committee. What the committee applied to the resolution of each case—prodding the Commission to deny a license for a site considered too densely populated, or counseling against another site because the earthquake possibility seemed too great—was its members' experience in related fields of knowledge and their own simple, intelligent conservatism. That there have been no fatal accidents affecting the public or even the working force in the power stations arising from a failure of the nuclear elements indicates that they must have done their safety job well.

YET an evaluation of the performance of the safety mission is not quite so easy. At what cost was safety achieved? Some would

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argue, naturally, that no cost for safety can be too high, especially in the face of such high social risks as the release of radioactivity on a dense civilian population. But if the risks are so grossly improbable that redundant and expensive safety precautions have caused the cost of nuclear power to climb to the point at which it may become useless, the proponents of safety have done only half of their job (though surely the more important half). Professor Okrent talks from time to time about the desirability of quantifying risks, a process that would enable the regulators to come much closer to prescribing safety measures whose costs would bear a reasoned and reasonable relationship to the reality of the dangers against which they are expected to protect the public. While rather respectful of Professor Rasmussen's WASH-1400 Reactor Safety Study, and most particularly of the integrity of the people involved in it, Professor Okrent does not believe that the linked probabilities of hypothetical accident chains—the method used by the Rasmussen team to estimate, for example, that a major accident with radioactivity leaks to the public can be expected once in every 20,000 reactor years—offer as sound a measure of the safety of nuclear power (and the cost of establishing that safety) as much more intensive experimentation with actual reactor vessels. He does not explicitly say so, but I suspect that what he would like to do is build a full-scale reactor, allow its core to melt, and see what would happen to the containment building in which it is located.

There might be fractional tests that would produce other good data, but engineers have generally learned more from their mistakes than their successes. In a real sense, nuclear power technology suffers from the fact that there have been no catastrophic failures to study. What keeps someone—anyone—from building and destroying a test reactor vessel in a test containment building is not the danger to the public, but the cost. Located in a remote area, the test would be immeasurably less dangerous to the public than the testing of a single atomic bomb.

Of course, the question of cost is paramount, and points directly to the riddle within the structure of the nuclear power program in the United States. Was it sound policy to develop nuclear power as a private activity mingled with government stimulation and regulation? Might it not have been more productive to develop a new pattern of government-private collaboration in which the government could have provided the financing for full-scale testing that no power company or consortium of power companies could have afforded or been assured of recapturing through the state regulation of electric rates? It is clear in Dr. Okrent's book that the several interests in safety on the part of the government itself are often in conflict. Although he does not say so in so many words (Dr. Okrent really never says anything in so many words; the reader is left to draw his own generalizations from the cases he presents), he implies that the regulatory staff of the Commission's

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Division of Reactor Licensing is very much interested in making a success of the nuclear program, and that this goal can be achieved only if a large number of reactors are built and operating. The Advisory Committee on which Professor Okrent has been sitting for so long tends to be more conservative in its positions, and less chary about changing its mind about features previously approved in other reactors.

The industry, about which we hear very little directly in this book, has an obvious interest in developing a standardized design for the plant, standardized at least within the different technological modes put forward by the four manufacturers who have been trying to capture part of the field. The operating utilities, though they too would dearly like to know in advance exactly what requirements they will have to meet, find themselves constrained in the search for suitable sites. They recognize that the public will loudly demand stringent safety standards on sites that are near concentrations of population, but they also know the cost of transmitting electricity and find that there is as much opposition to extremely high voltage lines, especially when the power is being carried over areas that will not directly receive benefits from it. These criss-cross currents of economic pressure might be more effectively channeled if they rose from a united private-government mode of ownership that could afford testing by destruction of major components and assemblies of the nuclear parts of the plant.

Some would argue that combining the government with the private investor in a mutually owned profit-making enterprise would vitiate the government's role as a regulator of safety. But the conflicts between the regulatory staff and the Advisory Committee reveal that an independent committee, properly constituted and staffed, can be depended upon to retain its independence in evaluation. Without a new form of collaboration, it seems unlikely that any of the very complex and potentially hazardous operations on which man's economic future will depend can be adequately tested. The lack of an adequate testing program has so far not meant that the nuclear power program has endangered the public; it may (or may not) have meant that alternative designs could be safer, or cheaper and as safe.

Professor Okrent continues to trouble deaf heaven with his cries for more thorough testing of alternative reactor vessel design, and has tormented the reader with the quandaries that have bedevilled him in deciding whether Indian Point #2 (in Westchester County, N.Y.) or Malibu (in California) are suitable sites. Yet he tells us on page 329 of a densely printed volume that "all of the information at my disposal strongly supports the conclusion that nuclear power imposes risks to the most affected individual or to society which are comparable to or less than those from coal or oil as an electricity source, and it imposes far less risk than most other technologies or large-scale industrial or agricultural activities today." These

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words from one who has looked down into the reactor vessel are encouraging even if his report on the whole ownership-regulatory complex indicates that further technological progress depends on non-technological issues, which are harder to resolve.

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# The Religious Future of Liberalism

THOMAS J. MAIN

***George M. Marsden:* Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925.** *Oxford University Press. 320 pp. $19.95.*

***Steven M. Tipton:* Getting Saved from the Sixties: Moral Meaning in Conversion and Cultural Change.** *University of California Press. 382 pp. $19.95.*

I first saw the movie version of *Inherit the Wind* when I was about twelve and, as far as I was concerned, it was a much more important religious experience than my confirmation, which I also had about then. Like many young Catholics, I took a special glee in irreverent humor, and certainly few people ever delivered agnostic wisecracks with greater charm than Gene Kelly as the E.K. Hornbeck/H.L. Mencken character. It was quite a brainstorm to cast Kelly as Mencken; the physical agility he brought to even a strictly dramatic part managed to suggest the wonderful verbal gymnastics I encountered when I read a little bit of Mencken a few years later. For a long time, the image of a Kellyesque Mencken archly sniping at what he called William Jennings Bryan's "baroque theology" and "alpaca pantaloons" was to me the incarnation of liberal progress in combat with reactionary dogmatism.

I still think very highly of Gene Kelly and like to think of myself as being on the side of liberalism, but, sad to say, my old hero Mencken came down quite a bit in my view when I became more acquainted with his political opinions. Not only did I then learn that Mencken was an anti-democrat—something hard to square with any brand of liberalism—but he was quite explicit in connecting his religious skepticism with his anti-democratic politics. In *Treatise on the Gods* he wrote, "With the spread of the democratic pestilence . . . the rulers of the civilized nations began to take their mandates from inferior groups, consequently unintelligent and hence incapable of skepticism . . . the mob has made its superstitution official." I have long ago recovered from my idol's fall from grace, but the relation between religion (specifically Christianity) and a lib-

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eral political order in America still interests me. Perhaps the two are as organically linked as Mencken implies, in which case those of us who are not prepared to embrace his politics had better ask whether, and how, liberal principles can survive now that Christianity plays a much smaller role in American culture than it did when Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan in 1925 (or even Spencer Tracy and Frederick March in 1955) locked horns.

NEITHER *Fundamentalism and American Culture* nor *Getting Saved from the Sixties* is primarily about the relation between liberalism and religion, but taken together they make a sort of chronicle of its decline and fall over the last hundred years. Marsden begins his book in 1870, when the idea that America's democratic republican form of government and history of social reform—its liberal tradition—was grounded in Christian morality was a commonplace; he ends in 1925, when the idea was almost literally laughed out of court at the Scopes trial. Tipton picks up not too long after, in the post World War II period, when liberalism justified itself primarily in utilitarian terms, with the result that the very people who benefited most from its accomplishments—middle-class youths—are founding "alternative religious movements" that implicitly or even explicitly condemn liberalism, and whose moral ideas, Tipton argues, are the basis of an emerging post-liberal culture. In short, once the mob's old superstitution, Christianity, ceased to be official (or rather, quasi-official), new and considerably more baroque superstitutions started to take its place, with results not even a wise-guy like Mencken would find amusing.

Marsden's primary concern is "the question of fundamentalists' own attitudes towards American culture," and his conclusion is that "These American Christians underwent a remarkable transformation in their relationship to the culture. Respectable 'evangelicals' in the 1870's, by the 1920's they had become a laughingstock, ideological strangers in their own land." One aspect of this transformation was that the evangelicals of the late-19th century who had advocated an essentially liberal political program had by the 1920's become die-hard reactionaries, opposed to or at best indifferent to the tradition of social reforms they had once taken as a necessary adjunct of Christian faith.

IN the mid-19th century a synthesis of liberalism and Protestantism was seen as entirely natural, indeed necessary: "In 1870 almost all American Protestants thought of America as a Christian nation." The idea of America as a Christian nation has a distinctly theocratic ring to it today, but the 19th-century evangelicals were hardly theocrats. To them a Christian America was also a democratic republican America, for they believed, as Marsden writes, that "Virtue among the citizenry, as almost all political economists said, was the foundation of successful civilization, especially a republican civilization. Religion was the basis for true virtue . . .

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Christianity was the purest religion." Protestant religious leaders were then dyed-in-the-wool democrats—although usually of the Republican variety. Further, for the most part they had no quarrel with the secular nature of America's political institutions. Although a few supported a Christian amendment to the Constitution, most evangelicals of that time, Marsden writes, ". . . were proud of their own unique achievement since they had shown that the moral basis for national success could be maintained without an officially established church."

Protestants in the 19th century thought their religion committed them to a program of social reform that included most of the liberal agenda. Although a few evangelicals espoused causes that were harebrained enough (for example, anti-Masonry), most of their concerns would still pass as liberal nowadays. Among the social reform movements evangelical Protestants led, Marsden mentions women's rights, care of freed slaves, labor unions, and improvement of the condition of the poor. In one sense, as Marsden says, the evangelical's "program to meet the challenges of the 1870's was essentially conservative," for they attempted to solve social problems, as one of them put it, "gradually and safely, by wise and conservative legislation," and also by private initiative.

THESE Protestants were thus committed to the notion that America was both a Christian society and a liberal society. But the synthesis of liberalism and Christianity could work only if it were believed that the citizenry could be counted on to know and do the right thing—the Christian thing—in the newly free and prosperous society liberalism helped create. The ground for that belief was provided by the intellectual tradition through which Christianity was interpreted in 19th-century America, "Common Sense Realism," the basics of which Marsden quickly limns. This philosophy, as originated by Thomas Reid and developed by later thinkers such as Sir William Hamilton, was a response to the skeptical arguments of Bishop Berkeley and David Hume. Hume and Berkeley, following Locke, maintained that we understand the world through the intermediation of it by our ideas, and then asked how we can be sure our ideas accurately reflect reality. The Common Sense philosophers believed that, if they accepted this analysis of knowledge, there was no way of answering the skeptics' questions. They therefore maintained that we can know reality directly, without our ideas of it functioning as epistemological middlemen. Ordinary people's common sensical view of the world was therefore held to be essentially correct. Common Sense philosophy thus was strongly anti-elitist, but not, like contemporary anti-elitism, morally subjectivist. It maintained, as Marsden writes, that "one can intuitively know the first principles of morality as certainly as one can apprehend other essential aspects of reality," and that these first principles were also revealed by Christianity.

Common Sense philosophy, therefore, made it possible to believe

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that a liberal society would be a good society, not only because it allowed people to do what they pleased, but because the things they would be pleased to do—improve their lot and the lot of others through, among other things, social reform—were inherently good.

THE increasing importance of science in intellectual life posed a challenge which Common Sense philosophy was unable to meet. According to Marsden, Common Sense philosophy gave an essentially 17th-century or Baconian account of science. It assumed science was simply a sort of codification of ordinary observations; imaginative speculation was thought to be almost the opposite of science. But modern science relies on an apparently speculative device Common Sense philosophy was unable to account for—the hypothesis. Particularly unaccountable was the evolutionary hypothesis, from which biology jumped off to arrive at conclusions that were obviously at odds with what passed for common sense at the turn of the century.

More sophisticated philosophies of science appeared, therefore, from which devloped new social philosophies. Pragmatism was one. C.S. Peirce wrote extensively on the hypothesis, which he claimed arose through a sort of imaginative process he called abduction. Peirce did not write much on social affairs but, of course, William James and John Dewey did and developed his ideas into a full-blown social philosophy. Marsden does make some mention of how Pragmatism came to supplant Common Sense philosophy as a major influence in American intellectual life, but he says nothing about another philosophy that became the dominant American philosophy—not in academic circles but in its influence on everyday life—utilitarianism. In *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, John Stuart Mill developed an essentially Berkeleyan account of perception and knowledge to take on the foremost Common Sense philosopher of his day. When he was done, it was utilitarianism—not the philosophy through which 19th-century American Protestants had interpreted their religion and society—that was generally taken as common sense.

With the wane of Common Sense philosophy, the synthesis came apart. Those who continued to view America as essentially a Christian society were relegated to the intellectual and cultural backwaters and developed an increasingly reactionary stance towards the growing influence of utilitarianism and other strains of modern thought. Liberals were therefore no longer able to justify American political institutions or their social agenda in terms of Christian morality and so had to rely on strictly utilitarian arguments. What became of liberalism at that point is told in *Getting Saved from the Sixties*.

TIPTON'S book is a study of the cultural and religious aftermath of the counterculture, specifically of alternative religious movements that have sprung up in its wake. But first he describes a

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crucial shift in what he calls "American moral culture": the shift from biblical religion, specifically Protestantism, to utilitarianism as its dominant element. Although biblical religion is still a force in American moral culture, utilitarianism has had "growing influence over American life [that] derives in part from the compatibility of utilitarian individualism with the conditions of modernity: technological economic production, bureaucratic social organization, and empirical science."

But one problem remains: "Utilitarianism," Tipton writes, "by itself has not been able to rationalize or justify American social life." Nor has utilitarianism been able to justify the political aspect of American social life, liberalism. Tipton writes that by the 1960's, "The great goals of corporate liberalism . . . material abundance, economic and social security, leisure opportunities . . . had become accomplished facts, and as such were taken for granted by [our] children . . . With the achievement of its economic objectives, what had been deferred for their sake reemerged: personal, cultural and social goals gathered under the rubric 'the quality of life' and posed as questions of ends."

Now, utilitarianism gives a rather vague account of moral ends; it holds that right actions are those that have good consequences, but exactly which consequences are good it does not specify. As Tipton asserts, questions of moral ends are traditionally answered by religion, but Protestantism no longer plays the role in American life that it once did, so new religious and quasi-religious movements have sprung up to take its place as the moral basis of American society and politics. Most of *Getting Saved from the Sixties* is devoted to detailed analyses of three such alternative religions—*est,* an organization called the Pacific Zen Center, and a fundamentalist commune called the Living World Fellowship—and more generally of the human potential, neo-Oriental, and conservative Christian movements.

Alternative religions have developed a set of moral ideas that, both for their adherents and others, are today playing the same role in American society that Common Sense philosophy once did; they are the intellectual medium through which "sixties" youths apply their religious beliefs to political and social concerns. Each of the three religions has its own characteristic moral system, with certain common elements. First, the ground of these ideas is not common sense but some kind of ecstatic experience—*est* training, Zen meditation, or being "born again." Tipton writes, "Members do not *have* these experiences. Instead these experiences take hold of them: tongues 'speak' the speaker; zazen 'breathes' the breather; even the *est* training 'takes you on a roller coaster ride.' . . . The hard edges of individualism, philosophical realism, and technical reason blur under the experiential impact of alternative religion." These religions thus leave the nature of reality and the individual's role in it far more ambiguous than did Common Sense Realism,

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and therefore encourage an essentially passive attitude towards the world. As Tipton puts it, "Experiencing and accepting the world instead of trying to control it remains a central theme in alternative religions." While Common Sense Realism implied that people could be counted on to know and do the right thing so long as they were free to do so, alternative religions implicitly advise leaving well enough alone. For them "Life is no longer a matter of wanting more and pursuing it, but rather of recognizing what is enough and accepting it."

Clearly, the implications of these ideas are anti-liberal, especially as regards the value of improvement of the human condition through social reform. In the last and most interesting part of his book, Tipton considers what effect the spread of alternative religions' moral ideas is having on American political attitudes. He writes that "the ideological upsurge of conservative Christianity, ecological monism and psychological individualism throughout American culture is already unmistakable. So is the weakening of liberalism. . . . We are witnessing the beginnings of a post-liberal culture, rooted in personal lifestyle but reaching through social values into the polity."

Tipton never explicitly defines what he means by a post-liberal culture, nor what its politics would be, but his analysis suggests that a post-liberal America would be an anti-liberal, indeed perhaps even anti-democratic, America. Tipton mentions that because of the influence of the alternative religions' moral ideas (and also because of alleged structural changes in the economy) "the key political value of equality comes under mounting pressure to shift, at least partly, from equality of opportunity to get ever more to equality of results pegged on a generalizable determination of just how much *enough* amounts to." Now, alternative religions do claim to know how much is enough and their moral ideas therefore seem compatible with a more equalitarian (if less free) society.

WHAT then is our future as a liberal society? It seems that Americans will insist on justifying their society to themselves in moral rather than strictly utilitarian terms. The only question is what morality—will it be one that is taken to imply a liberal society, or not? Marsden's book begins in a period when the prevailing moral ideas did indeed imply a liberal society and so sustained a politics of democracy and reform; Tipton's book shows that the ideas now becoming influential no longer do so. I doubt these ideas will ever become influential enough to fundamentally threaten our society's liberal nature, but their rejection of liberal values probably does reduce moral self-confidence among Americans. There is no answer to this problem except to take up alternative religions' challenge to liberal values and be willing—as utilitarianism generally is not—to rationally debate moral ends and hope liberalism will out. We have nearly forgotten how to conduct such a debate, or even to believe it is possible, but in fact it still goes on—

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Marsden's and Tipton's books are largely accounts of debates over moral ends. The only problem is that for a long time we liberals have not had to argue our position. I see no reason why we shouldn't; there's no point in losing by default.

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# Poverty and Emotion

T. P. MOYNIHAN

***James T. Patterson:*** **America's Struggle Against Poverty: 1900-1980.** *Harvard University Press. 268 pp. $17.50.*

***Thomas Bentz:*** **New Immigrants: Portraits in Passage.** *The Pilgrim Press. 209 pp. $7.95 paper.*

***Thomas Sowell:*** **Markets and Minorities.** *Basic Books. 141 pp. $13.50.*

MILLIONS of unskilled poor people enter this country every year, legally and illegally. At the same time, a permanent dependent class may be developing within the poor already here. Not so very long ago such matters were the subject of broad and serious academic concern; scores of sober people devoted their careers to the study of poverty, hoping to understand, ease, and perhaps eventually eliminate the problems involved. Unfortunately, the field has become polarized by emotion and poisoned with dogma.

Measured in federal dollars, the poverty industry has been doing very well; it exploded in the 1960's and has been growing steadily ever since. Strangely enough, although the volume of publications on the subject has also grown, the quality of discourse has suffered. Poverty was politicized, and as the decibels mounted on the right and the left, more rational voices were drowned out. The result is that, almost without exception, books about poverty are either shamelessly emotional or woefully inconclusive. Neither helps us to understand our problems.

JAMES T. PATTERSON'S *America's Struggle Against Poverty: 1900-1980* (more accurately "The American *Government's* Struggle Against Poverty") is a good example of the latter. Patterson has distilled a great deal of information, has set forth that information clearly and reasonably, and has concluded next to nothing. This is not an accident; as Patterson himself says in his preface:

> Readers will note that I am trying to write history, not a guide to welfare reform in the future. For that reason I have resisted the advice of some friends who urged that any book on this subject *must* explain

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> where the story will end. I wish I knew. Because I do not, in the final chapter I offer only tentative opinions about what lies ahead. Those who wish to label me may use those pages to do so.

Judging from that final chapter, I would label Professor Patterson "cautious." He cannot bring himself to say any more than that nothing dramatic will happen for a few years and that there are conflicting points of view.

There are merits in this neutral approach; Patterson manages to tell a good deal of truth without getting into trouble—or being labeled. He seems to realize and appreciate the actual progress that has been made and the inevitable limitations of government efforts. As his title suggests, he begins at the turn of the century when America "discovered" poverty, examines the New Deal's various relief programs, follows them up to the 1960's when America "rediscovered" poverty, and discusses the welfare plans of the Johnson, Nixon, and Carter administrations. In short, he covers everything the government has tried to do in the last 80 years.

Of all fields of social science, the study of poverty begs for application. Patterson sticks to his sanitized history to an extreme and goes to great lengths to avoid an opinion. Patterson understands the coalition Johnson put together in support of his Great Society, how the Vietnam war diverted funding and energy from his programs, how the anti-war movement overlapped the pro-welfare movement, and how the coalition fell apart. He understands the resulting congressional conservative *and* liberal opposition to welfare reform, how it killed the Nixon administration's Family Assistance Plan, and how it doomed Carter's similar (if more shallow) reform program. He understands how impossible promises and rising expectations became confused with reality in the minds of the public and administrators alike, how government programs can have unexpected and unwanted results, and how the bureaucracy stifles and lobbies for itself. Still, he concludes nothing.

He sees that the public has always had a dislike and suspicion of welfare. He sees that class misunderstandings interfered with and misdirected efforts at reform. He sees that ethnic groups have become competing lobbies and the terrible harms this has caused. He even goes so far as to question militants: "[C]onflict for what? When it involved the poor, conflict perhaps lessened feelings of powerlessness, but did it promote community cohesion? And what was the point of arousing the poor, perhaps stimulating riotous behavior, if you could not gratify them? Of what use was power if it did not bring tangible economic rewards?" At least he dares to ask the questions.

THOMAS BENTZ is less shy about providing answers. His book, *New Immigrants: Portraits in Passage*, gives us about as much emotional infusion as the subject can withstand without collapsing. Bentz would have us open our borders to one and all, and only vaguely acknowledges that it might not be so uncomplicated. The

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bulk of his book consists of vignettes from the life histories of a dozen or so families, and he stops at nothing in his effort to elicit sympathy. He lists famous immigrants such as Albert Einstein and Andrew Carnegie, and tells us that it is in our own interest to let people into the country; he makes speeches about the Statue of Liberty turning her back on the Asian immigrants in the west; he admires the "blinding beauty of the black struggle"; and he has moderate praise for Johnson's Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. Bentz also tells us that America has caused most of the problems in the world and that we therefore owe it something. He equates the loathsome regime of "Baby Doc" Duvalier with the government of South Korea, despite the facts that living standards in South Korea have improved steadily and radically since their war and that nobody is threatening to overrun Haiti. He gives his chapters titles like "In the House of Torture" and "Jim Lockwood: Border Patrol." He even has poems and folksongs, like this one which opens the chapter called "Sweatshop Sleuth":

> Mexico, my country
> where I was born a mexican
> give me the blessing
> of your powerful hand.
> I go to the United States
> to make my living.
> Farewell, my beloved land,
> I take you in my heart.
> Don't condemn me
> for leaving my land in this way;
> the fault lies with poverty
> and with necessity.

Well, art may speak for itself, but I don't see how this helps us to understand the problems of Mexicans in this country. "Those who seek our shores today are not different," says the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame, in his preface to Bentz's book. Why, then, are we so often told to treat them as if they were?

As is so often true, Thomas Sowell is an exception to the poverty of writing about poverty. *Markets and Minorities* is another of his attempts to depoliticize the subject. Not only that, he even includes some fresh ideas. He is blunt: "The central purpose of this book has not been its particular conclusions but the analytical approach—treating conflicting beliefs as empirically testable hypotheses rather than as axioms or creeds." One might almost say that this book is a primer on how to think like Thomas Sowell (would that more people did).

He takes several truisms about poverty and explains, step by step, how to pick them apart and turn them inside out. Despite the ringing sincerity of his prose, he is strictly non-dogmatic and logical—

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or "economic." He explains how the minimum wage law reduces incentives not to discriminate by forbidding blacks the option of pricing themselves below the market so as to secure a job, and how it denies unskilled youth the chance to gain work ability so as to increase their market value as employees. He points out that racism is not such a factor in income discrepancy as is commonly believed by showing that equally black West Indians and equally identifiable Chinese and Japanese do very well for themselves in this country. He deflates the notion of societal or capitalist racism by showing that their prime critics, universities and the government, have been far less consistent and far more discriminatory over the years. Many of these observations are not exactly new, but they bear repeating.

One of Sowell's examples is revealing of his approach. It is widely held that Jews earn far more money than blacks, presumably because they are not black. Sowell produces the figures on average income-per-family but then contrasts them with the median age of each ethnic group. The larger picture is very different. Table I shows a wide range of relative family incomes, but it also shows

TABLE I. *Age and Income by Ethnic Group.**

| ETHNIC GROUP | RELATIVE FAMILY INCOME (PERCENT OF NATIONAL AVERAGE) | MEDIAN AGE |
|---|---|---|
| Jew | 172 | 46 |
| Pole | 115 | 40 |
| German | 107 | 36 |
| Black | 62 | 22 |
| American Indian | 60 | 20 |

* Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and the National Jewish Population Study; from Thomas Sowell, *Markets and Minorities.*

a wide range of median ages; American Poles may earn almost twice as much as American Indians, but they are twice as old. There is a clear and easily comprehensible relation between age and income: It makes perfect sense that a 46 year old should make more than a 22 year old, since the older worker generally has much more work experience and knowledge. This is not to say that racial prejudice is not a factor at all in black income, only that it is usually a grossly exaggerated one. Sowell is not afraid to say so.

In all fairness to Patterson and Bentz, I have to say that Sowell's book is rather uneven. It is clear and solid on topics already covered in Sowell's newspaper columns, but can be turgid on new material, as if it were a long rough draft. Nonetheless, anyone who dares to come to his conclusions *after* he has examined his facts deserves the staunch support of all—and needs it. Sowell has suffered vilifying abuse at the hands of "experts," black and white. *The Nation* regularly refers to him as Uncle Thomas Sowell; they will not judge him on what he has said, but only for his violation of their dogma.

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It is no wonder that he writes with such defensive insistence. It must be said: The sad—heinous—fact is that this man could not have said what he has if it were not for his race. What have we come to? Do we need credentials beyond the control of any human in order to state what we see as fact? Is not the study of poverty too important for such emotional posturing?

THE very nature of poverty in America has changed. If one counts in-kind benefits such as food stamps, housing assistance, and medical care, poor people in this country get almost as much as working class people do. The difference is less a matter of income than of sources of income, prospects for the future, and how the income is disposed of. Generally, a poor man will not starve in America unless he chooses to, but he has other problems. He gets his money at the sufferance of others who work for it yet do not have a substantially higher standard of living. He cannot depend on his income increasing or even continuing, and by law he cannot save and thus plan for the future. All of this, of course, is not a simple situation. It is all the more important, therefore, that it not be looked at in a simple-minded, dogmatic way.

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# Opinion in the Liberal State

JAMES PIERESON

***Jennifer Hochschild:* What's Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice.** *Harvard University Press. 345 pp. $22.50.*

***Dan Usher:* The Economic Prerequisite to Democracy.** *Columbia University Press. 160 pp. $22.50.*

THE liberal state may be defined as that complex of institutions which permits what is private to control and to define what is public. It places the society in charge of the state, and thereby prevents the state from developing an interest of its own. It narrows the scope of politics because its ethos says that the state is at best a necessary evil and that it should not act except for the most powerful reasons. It defends the individual against the collective, thereby creating rights against the state. It is sometimes called the "negative" state because its function is not to accomplish good but to prevent evil. It is widely vilified in our time, as we know, because one of the "evils" it prevents is a thoroughgoing redistribution of wealth through the agency of the state. It was to prevent this, many say, that the liberal state was organized in the first place.

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The United States is the archetypical liberal state, one formed out of the attempt to make popular government safe for individual rights and private property. One could say with some justice that the above description is but an abstraction from the political formula that has governed this country since 1787. The contents of that formula were expressed clearly enough in some of Madison's essays in *The Federalist* (especially in numbers 10 and 51 of that series) where he made the case for the extended republic and the separation of powers, two of the institutions on which limited government still rests. It is sometimes forgotten that Madison finally rested his case on more fundamental ground. "All power has been traced up to opinion," he wrote in one of his later essays opposing Hamilton: "The stability of all governments and the security of all rights may be traced up to the same source." Public opinion which incorporates the ideas of individual rights and private property is finally the basis on which the liberal state rests, and it is the rock, so to speak, on which critics of that system continue to run aground.

Such a critic of the liberal state is Jennifer Hochschild, professor of politics at Princeton University. She has written a careful, academically respectable book with the arresting title *What's Fair?* which tells us what Americans now believe about equality, private property, and the redistribution of wealth. Justice, she believes, requires that wealth be substantially "redistributed downward," but she seems surprised and puzzled that the beneficiaries of distributive justice do not want it, or at least do not act as if they want it.

Her volume begins with that memorable colloquy between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson on the disappearance of the prized race horse in which Holmes remarks on the significance of a silent watch-dog. Why did the dog not bark? This "non-event" was an important clue which the sleuth used to unravel the mystery. The detective's method is appropriated by Professor Hochschild to raise some parallel political questions: Why is there no socialism in the United States? Why do the poor not insist on the redistribution of wealth and greater equality of incomes? These are certainly not new questions, and one doubts that the author had to resort to the Holmesian science of deduction to discover them. Still, she manages to say a few things about them that have not been said before.

Professor Hochschild proceeds sensibly enough by simply going out and asking ordinary citizens what they believe about equality and "distributive justice" in the different spheres of life. The heart of the book consists of reports of interviews the author conducted with some twenty citizens of New Haven, Connecticut, ten of them relatively wealthy and ten relatively poor. Reported in fine detail, these conversations make interesting reading. Her respondents were surprisingly candid and articulate about their views of politics, work, and social relations.

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What we learn from this line of inquiry is not exactly surprising. Nearly all of these people, it turns out, both the rich and poor alike, endorse the idea of equality in the political sphere where "equality before the law" is at stake, but endorse a "differentiating" principle in the economic sphere where the distribution of wealth is at issue. They do not endorse schemes of redistribution because they think that people require some inducements to get them to work. Here we learn of difficult struggles by families to succeed and to get ahead, and of some failures to do so, but we hear nothing of socialism nor any strong wish to equalize incomes. As the author writes, "this entire work is a demonstration of the strength of Anglo-American liberal political theory in ordinary people's distributive judgments." These respondents, like most Americans, do not want a government with the power to seize and redistribute wealth. "For whatever reason," she concludes, "a significant proportion of Americans energetically support [sic] the status quo." It would seem from these interviews that the poor do not revolt because they do not believe they are treated unjustly.

YET in the end Professor Hochschild does not draw the conclusion to which her own evidence would seem to compel her. Though on the surface it appears that people endorse the status quo, deep down, she suggests, they have real reservations about it. It is her view that people are ambivalent and uncertain about their political views and feelings; they may be verbally consistent, but they are internally conflicted. These conflicts cause anger, distress, and anxiety. Citing Antonio Gramsci, the theoretician of Italian Marxism, the author suggests that the abstract beliefs handed down over the generations by society are in conflict with the daily experiences of many citizens. Public opinion is in this way not a direct expression of public feelings. The values of economic competition and inequality are in conflict with the practical equality with which many people conduct their social relations. Such conflicts cause passivity, but they may also hold out some hope for Professor Hochschild's agenda. There may exist, then, an unstable emotional underground in the society, the energy from which may some day be called forth to fuel a political movement aimed at establishing equality in all spheres of life.

This interpretation is wishful thinking not supported in any systematic way by the evidence gleaned from the author's interviews. An imaginative investigator may find any number of things when he peers into the collective subconscious. Others with different hopes—and fears—have reported different accounts for this landscape. In the end, it is not clear from the volume why the poor do not revolt ("why the dog does not bark"), except that they seem to think it sensible not to do so.

DAN USHER, a professor of economics at Queens University in Canada, offers a different kind of book on the liberal state in *The Economic Prerequisite to Democracy*. Here he presents an

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imaginative, if idiosyncratic, case against the redistributive state, and in favor of a limited one. His subject is the relationship between democracy and the economic system, and he maintains that democracy cannot survive in a system in which the state is permitted to allocate any substantial share of the income of the society. In arguing that a command economy is incompatible with democracy, Usher sounds a great deal like the Hayek of *The Road to Serfdom* or the Madison of *The Federalist.*

He argues strongly that the preservation of democracy ought to be the cardinal principle in a democratic system, and that economic policy ought to be framed with this criterion clearly in view. Democracy is most seriously threatened, he goes on to argue, when the legislature is given control over the distribution of income in the society. There seem to be two reasons for this. First, such powers given over the legislature dangerously escalate the stakes of political conflict, so that, with more to lose, contending parties are less likely to negotiate peacefully. Second, under a system of majority rule, a winning coalition is bound to form with an interest in plundering the property of a minority. He reasons that "If the assignment of the national income is to be decided by majority rule and all citizens are prepared to abide by the outcome of the vote regardless of the consequences to themselves, then the only stable outcome is one where just under half the population is deprived of income altogether." Since the minority cannot peacefully go along with this, it must try to break up the government by force, which must lead in turn to some type of armed rule.

Democracy requires, in his view, a mechanism for distributing income that is largely independent of democratically elected bodies. Such a mechanism he calls a system of "equity," borrowing a term from the common law and giving it another meaning. He uses it here, apparently, because the distinction between law and equity corresponds with that between political and non-political modes of distributing property. "A system of equity," he writes, "is a means society employs to assign incomes to people, outside of and prior to the political process." The private market serves as a system of equity in a capitalist system, and precisely because it is private it is fully compatible with political democracy. It is tempting to say that it is the only system that is compatible with democracy, as Usher understands it, because it is the only modern system that establishes a private distribution of income and property. Yet he is not a typical believer in the free market, who insists that private property arises from natural rights: "I intend to show that property rights are maintained because democracy needs them for its survival, and I do not want the waters muddied with talk of natural rights."

ONE concedes a great deal to socialism, and to the critics of democratic capitalism, in asserting that property rights are conventional and without inherent justification. Usher nonetheless

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makes a strong case against socialism, arguing that a socialist order can have no system of equity because it abolishes distinctions between public and private. He tries to show, rather abstractly, "that the establishment of socialism—defined as nothing less than the complete ownership of the means of production by the state—would sooner or later split voters into factions with interests so sharply opposed that democratic government could not be maintained." Using the language of liberalism to describe socialism, he writes, "social democracy is impossible because it forces the assignment of income into the legislature." The attempt to impose socialism on a society leads to the dissolution of democratic government, for the reasons mentioned earlier, and to rule by a state that commands the society. In short, "no state at once socialist and democratic has ever been observed."

It turns out that Usher believes there can be a socialist system of equity, but it is a highly problematic one. He argues that democracy is not compatible with the legislative assignment of income, but, curiously enough, it is compatible with income assignment by the state so long as this assignment is made outside the legislature. Socialist planning, then, is not incompatible with democracy if it is carried out by some group other than the legislature. The question then turns on the ability of the planner to "maintain an independence from the legislature not appreciably less than that maintained between the private sector and the legislature in a capitalist economy." The planner must be given political independence to apply neutral rules to the organization of the economy. The question is thus reduced before long to the technical one of whether the planner can know enough to direct an economy of any complexity. The difference between the market and state planning is reduced in this way to one of technical efficiency, since both seem compatible with political democracy. In pursuing this line of argument, Usher has departed very far from his original intentions. But in the end he fears that the planner, freed from all political restraints, will arrogate all power to himself, and put to an end all appearances of democracy.

USHER's argument in this volume depends heavily on what he means by "democracy", since this is the criterion according to which all else is judged. Is it merely a set of technical voting rules used to arrive at decisions, as Schumpeter claimed in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*? Or is it a way of life, embracing also a whole system of private (i.e., "natural") rights, legal arrangements, and social relations, as Madison and Hayek, among others, claim? Usher sides with Schumpeter, and so he defines democracy simply as "decision-making by majority rule." He then suggests that we can preserve democracy as a voting system by reducing in importance the questions it is permitted to decide. This is a justifiable objective, but it should be kept in mind that this preserves formal democracy at the expense of what many regard as its substance.

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The liberal state is not easy to defend against critics who claim that it is not sufficiently democratic, or that it lacks any substantial moral justification. Professor Usher provides a defense of sorts against Professor Hochschild by showing that a private economy is a prerequisite to democracy, but in the process he severs both capitalism and democracy from their moral foundations, which lie in that system of private rights that connects them. He writes, "We do not expropriate the wealthy [sic] because it is not in the interest of the majority of voters to do so," but in fact we do not expropriate their wealth because most believe it is wrong to do so, as Professor Hochschild demonstrated with great skill. When the time arrives that people resist temptation out of interest, it cannot be very long until they give in to it. Usher's book gives us an original defense of the institutions of the liberal state, but in the end it does little to support the opinion on which those institutions rest.

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## The Pragmatic Urban Planner

JOSEPH B. ROSE

***Anthony Sutcliffe:*** **Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France, 1780-1914.** *St. Martin's Press. 230 pp. $25.00.*

***Paul Goldberger:*** **The Skycraper.** *Alfred A. Knopf. 180 pp. $25.00.*

THE problems of large American cities no longer draw the attention they did only a decade ago. Instead of focusing on bitter disputes over the location of public housing, the displacement of residential neighborhoods, or community participation in development decisions, the public and the media have shifted their concern to broader issues of economic policy. When cities are now discussed, it is usually in the context of overall economic development, unemployment, or disinvestment in public infrastructure.

This retreat from the national limelight has no doubt benefited the cities. We are spared the continuous assaults of those who would push their theories of "defensible space," "urban sprawl," and innumerable other insights into the "urban crisis." Twenty years after Jane Jacobs first called for an end to cities dominated by planners, the American city seems finally to have been spared the endless stream of dubious prescriptions proffered in the 1960's and 1970's. Perhaps the complex and stubborn nature of urban evolution was never suited to a frenzied debate which inevitably resulted in calls for bold government initiative.

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Still, cities are public places, and their problems are issues of public concern. Questions of policy concerning unbridled commercial construction, landmarks preservation, and the increasing homogeneity of some urban economies wait to be addressed. Now that the religious fervor with which some reformers approached the "urban crisis" has been diminished, it might be possible to reconsider urban problems in a more sober and pragmatic fashion, avoiding the extremes of massive urban planning on the one hand and anarchic development on the other.

HISTORICALLY, of course, urban planners have consistently urged large scale public intervention in the physical evolution of cities in order, according to Anthony Sutcliffe, "to promote their efficient and equitable functioning as economic and social units, and to create an aesthetically pleasing environment." Sutcliffe, Reader in Urban History at the University of Sheffield and an eminent urban historian, has written a stunning account of the genesis of the urban planning movement in the 19th century. *Towards the Planned City* is a thoroughly researched and documented comparative history which seems certain to become a classic text for students of urban history. Sutcliffe's sympathetic treatment of the ideology, political maneuvers, and endeavors of the early urban visionaries allows us to admire some of their accomplishments and sometimes tremble at their schemes.

In just 200 pages Sutcliffe captures the spirit of the early planners. In a brief segment on some of the period's prominent figures, Sutcliffe so clearly conveys the character of men like Werner Hegeman and the skeptical John Burns that *Towards the Planned City* would be worth reading as a work of historical biography. But his book is most valuable as an introduction to the history of planning.

The rise of planning was closely linked to the industrialization process. Many of the more unsavory aspects of the industrial age were evident in the world's larger cities; poor laborers (often immigrants) lived in crowded unsanitary housing, awkward congested streets hampered transportation flows, and frenzied economic activity appeared to brutalize city inhabitants. As Sutcliffe remarks, "To most observers, the biggest threat to the physical and moral health of the individual seemed to lie in the towns, and by the 1890's, many were even prepared to believe that environmental factors could override genetic ones to produce a declining quality of human stock from generation to generation." Throughout the industrialized world indomitable reformers (mostly well-educated and from wealthy backgrounds) assumed responsibility for rescuing their respective nations from the scourge of urbanization.

Starting with the serious problem of epidemics in crowded cities and transportation problems caused by old and outmoded streets, the planners quickly came to advocate extensive "public intervention in social and economic processes" to remedy the structural weaknesses of industrial society. In less than half a century, city

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planners progressed from figuring out how to combat tuberculosis epidemics by guaranteeing adequate light and air to providing "prototypes of an alternative social and economic system" in a decentralized "garden city" environment.

PERHAPS the most intriguing aspect of Sutcliffe's work is his comparison of the bewildering array of obstacles each country's planners faced in their crusade against irrational urban growth. Examining each nation's reaction to the idea of a public authority dominating the future reveals idiosyncracies of each society. The authoritarian powers retained by the German state from the Middle Ages accustomed Germans to state intervention and enabled German planning (*Stadtbau*) to dominate the field in its early years. Similarly, the British concern for public health reforms and the eradication of slums paved the way for government ordering of the urban environment and allowed the planning community great access to public officials.

Alas, urban reformers in other countries were not quite so lucky. France's planners were faced with the Herculean task of convincing French authorities that Paris required urgent improvements; Paris was enjoying one of its most influential and glorious periods after the huge public works programs ordered by Louis Napoleon and designed and implemented with eclat by his appointee, Georges Haussmann. Although not hostile to the idea of government intervention, the French did not seem inclined to pay much attention to the international planning movement. As Sutcliffe suggests, "perhaps because the world looked to France, the French scarcely felt the need to return the compliment."

By far the most frustrated planners of all were the energetic Americans like Daniel Burnham who had to contend with, "a unique social system which generated a distinctively suspicious attitude to the activities of government." Not to be outdone by their European mentors, enthusiastic "new world" city planners produced schemes, "the scale and ambition of which were widely recognized, even in Germany, as surpassing anything produced elsewhere." Numerous proposals issued forth, such as Burnham's spectacular plan for Chicago, which made Imperial Rome seem shabby. Yet these dreams were thwarted by what Sutcliffe singles out as the two most iniquitous forces in American cities: corrupt municipal governments and an unhealthy fear which eschews government intervention into the private sector unless absolutely necessary.

THE essential connection between urban planning and the preeminence of state control over land is the dominant theme of Sutcliffe's book. He even goes so far as to assert that "it was from municipal socialism that the idea of planning was born." Sutcliffe disparages the tendency of successful American planning efforts to accommodate the pragmatic needs of urban business as "too much an embodiment of the selfish interests of the landowners," while he holds up German and English attempts to impose "ambitious regula-

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tions" as models of farsightedness. Still, though the grid plan adopted by Manhattan in 1811 may not have been the most imaginative or aesthetically pleasing layout for a city, it certainly represents one of the first and most noteworthy examples of wide-scale urban planning. Even Sutcliffe admits that the grid "produces an efficient circulation system and a distribution of equal, rectangular parcels." Yet because private landowners favored the grid as an effective way to enhance property values, Sutcliffe only grudgingly concedes that New York's grid was an "isolated development in the public shaping of the American urban environment." One is forced to wonder whether he would be more inclined to view Manhattan's street plan as a seminal event in urban history if private landowners had vehemently objected to the grid and its imposition in spite of their protests could be portrayed as a victory for public control over conservative "selfish interests."

Sutcliffe's description of early urban planning as a revolutionary social force may well capture the spirit of the original planners, but it has also caused him to denigrate significant events like New York's 1916 zoning resolution as "the handmaiden of private property interests." While American cities were seeking means of making themselves more attractive to business, the European planners were engaged in what even Marx and Engels scorned as "utopian socialism"; garden cities, though they provided for only a tiny number of people, seemed to set a fine example for the masses.

Sutcliffe closes his history on a mournful note: Private landowners have managed to thwart the planners and maintain their grip on the urban economy. Astute reformers have realized that to accomplish their goal of social peace they have to "increasingly turn their attention from land to capital." But those planners who persisted in their efforts to seek social change through public control of urban land have been severely disappointed since, "planning's primary goal has become that of efficiency, and in that capacity it has become politically neutral, serving communist and capitalist state systems alike. Indeed here lies the source of much of the frustration felt by planners in a world which has reduced them to the level of technicians." *Requiem in Pace.*

In sharp contrast to the international planning movement's desire to deurbanize the city and impose social and economic reforms, the turn of the century American city took great pride in its economic vitality and regarded the unabashed skyscrapers erected by business as symbols of health and prosperity. Of course, the European planners were horrified at these monstrosities which simply indicated the "backward" state of American planning; after all, every major European city had at least some sort of basic height control. But no amount of foreign criticism could disuade Americans from believing that in the skyscraper they had found a genuine expression of the exuberance and expansiveness of American commerce. Paul Goldberger, architectural critic of the *New York Times* and one of the

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most sophisticated and least doctrinaire critics of urban architecture, has written a restrained paean to these buildings entitled, appropriately enough, *The Skyscraper.* His book is filled with remarkable photographs of the country's most prominent structures and a commentary which traces the skyscraper from its disciplined beginnings in Chicago to its nebulous future in the next decade. Just as Sutcliffe has grasped the essence of the first planners, so too has Goldberger selected the noteworthy features (both commercial and architectural) of the skyscraper and created an instructive and visually dazzling work.

According to Goldberger, "the [turn of the century American city] was growing, it was becoming to capitalism what Rome was to the church, and the more the city's role as a vital commercial center could be expressed through huge buildings, the stronger would be its position." Indeed, one clergyman was moved to refer to the Woolworth Building as "The Cathedral of Commerce." Advances in building technology (introduction of the steel frame and the elevator) combined with intense demand for land in the inner city to make tall buildings in cities such as New York and Chicago a virtual necessity. But the transition to skyscrapers depended also on a new attitude toward office buildings, one which appreciated their capacity to excite a city's imagination. Louis Sullivan, the pioneering architect in Chicago, described the character of a true skyscraper: "[It] must be tall, every inch of it tall. The force and power of altitude must be in it, the glory and pride of exaltation must be in it. It must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exaltation that from bottom to top it is a unit without a single dissenting line." Although the flamboyant and historicist features of New York's giants soon overwhelmed the rigors Sullivan imposed, his initial understanding of the skyscraper's unadorned majesty gained critical acceptance.

Goldberger follows the subsequent development of the skyscraper, lovingly describing masterworks such as the Woolworth and Chrysler Buildings, but coolly dismissing the insipid and vulgar. At times, Goldberger's felicitous choice of words rivals the spectacular photos in his book. In discussing New York's Chrysler Building he evokes a literary image of the jazz age: "Its bizarre form seems a perfect encapsulation of the energy and flamboyance of Manhattan at the end of the 1920's—all of the drive for height, all of the theatrical passion seem expressed in those flashy arches and slender spire . . . the quality of Chrysler as a work of architecture comes from its ability to be romantic and irrational and yet not quite so foolish as to be laughable; it stops just short and retains credibility in the midst of fantasy." Goldberger can condemn with equal force, as in his scorn for the General Motors Building where "rebellion resulted merely in glitz, in vulgar, showy pretension, and no more."

In addition to writing elegant architectural commentary, Goldberger confronts the sometimes controversial subject of the skyscraper's interactions with its surroundings. As early as the turn of the cen-

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tury, critics had viewed the skyscraper as a menace to public health and an architectural protuberance which would quickly bring about its own doom. Such fears were at least premature. By the late 1920's enough skyscrapers had been built without calamity that one could safely conclude that "skyscrapers did not destroy cities; they made them look different and they made their sidewalks more crowded, but they did not put an end to healthy urban civilization after all." But still the critics continued to harp. Raymond Hood, designer of Rockefeller Center and The Daily News building, responded to attacks on the city's density with the proclamation that, "Congestion is good!" In Goldberger's eyes, Hood understood that "the city was a marketplace of ideas, a place to which the very idea of congestion was basic—not a barrier to its correct functioning, but an enhancement of it."

Though the concerns of earlier critics proved exaggerated for their time, few would question their urgency today. No longer are a city's skyscrapers individual monuments contributing to a sense of wonder at economic power. Rather, an anarchic array of banal structures seem to cluster in already over-built sections of large cities. Such concentrations have overtaxed the urban infrastructure, swamped transportation services, and transformed vital density into suffocating congestion. One should not overlook the fact that many of the more recent skyscrapers have incorporated interesting and animated public spaces in their design. Nonetheless, the very success of the skyscraper as a means of achieving the highest and best use of costly urban land is beginning to put such pressure on "underutilized" land that the diversity of the urban landscape is at last seriously threatened. The central business districts of large cities are now faced with the possibility of a sterility similar to that which would have been imposed by the government had the early planners had their druthers. Unrestrained economic forces could well have the same result as their antithesis.

Public domination of urban development has proven itself unsuitable to the American city. In fact, few government endeavors have attracted so much abuse from so wide a range of critics. Such divergent souls as Roger Starr and Jane Jacobs can agree on the foolishness of massive urban planning efforts. But large scale public intervention in urban development is not the only recourse of cities. American cities have a long tradition of encouraging the private sector to act in ways beneficial to all. Just as New York's grid of 1811 imposed order on a chaotic street system and paved the way for efficient private use of privately owned land, so too can carefully considered zoning ordinances and targeted development incentives encourage private development to accommodate the city's precious diversity and respect the limits of municipal infrastructure. The current challenge for American cities is to discover a means to impose restrictions on developers (who have proven amazingly adept at circumventing even the most carefully worded laws) without succumbing to the Luddite tendencies of those who would stifle

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urban growth and turn American cities into architectural museums.

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## Assimilation and Private Life

MARTHA BAYLES

***Richard Rodriguez:* Hunger of Memory.** *David R. Godine. 195pp. $13.95.*

By delving into his experience as an assimilated, highly educated Mexican-American, Richard Rodriguez has struck a rare balance between the personal and the political. As he says in the preface to this lucid and affecting autobiography, "public issues—editorials and ballot stubs, petitions and placards, faceless formulations of greater and lesser good by greater and lesser minds—have bisected my life and changed its course." As a member of the generation which attended college in the 1960's, Rodriguez has felt the impact of the decade's politics on his formal education. Yet, unlike many of his generation, he has questioned that impact and formed his identity partly in opposition to it. This remarkable book is a meditation on why.

It begins with the subject of language: Rodriguez's negative opinion of bilingual education, interspersed with a narrative of his boyhood as the son of working-class Mexican immigrants living in an all-white section of Sacramento. Because of this unusual situation, Rodriguez spent his first few years believing that speaking Spanish was a peculiarity confined to his family. English was the language of an alien world that began, literally, at the doorstep. "For me there were none of the gradations between public and private so normal to the maturing child. Outside the house was public society; inside the house was private. Just opening or closing the screen door behind me was an important experience."

Obviously, such thresholds must be crossed. The young Rodriguez had to go to school and learn how to function in the social world. His point is that switching from Spanish to English was only a small part of the necessary, painful process of growing up. He criticizes the proponents of bilingual education for holding out "an astonishing promise: One can become a public person while still remaining a private person . . . There need be no tension between the self in the crowd and the self apart from the crowd! Who would not want to believe such an idea?" He stresses that such ideas are not to be believed, that using the family language in school will do nothing to erase the distinction between family and school. "*Intimacy is not created by a particular language; it is created by intimates.*"

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Without disparaging this insight, or the skill with which it is expressed, we can see its limitations as a critique of bilingual education. As Rodriguez himself emphasizes, his experience was far from typical. The majority of Mexican-Americans live in communities where Spanish is spoken in public at least as much as English, and the movement for bilingualism reflects a desire to maintain those communities—especially since the "old country" is not across an ocean but on the other side of a highly permeable border. Many of the Mexicans who reside in these communities have little intention of staying, much less changing their citizenship. The children of both groups feel a conflict of cultures which is real and ongoing, and not (as Rodriguez would have it) reducible to the ambivalence of the fledgling about to leave the nest.

Not only is the argument of this first chapter weak, it is sounded too often, with too many flourishes, as though it were much more arcane than it is. In the prologue Rodriguez apologizes for having written an entire book of "essays impersonating an autobiography; six chapters of sad, fuguelike repetition." After the first chapter, however, no such apology is needed. In the chapters that follow, notably the one on affirmative action, narrative coexists very well with opinion—perhaps because together they grow out of experiences that are both more recent and more typical.

In the late 1960's, when greater numbers of minority students began to appear on college campuses, Rodriguez became what he calls "one of the lucky ones." First at Stanford, then at Columbia and Berkeley, he allowed himself to be counted, computed, rewarded, advanced, and recruited—until in 1975, while fending off any number of English departments which were not about to "pass up the chance to get a Chicano with a Ph.D. in Renaissance literature," he said no to them all, and left the university in disgust. It is to his credit that he tells us how long he waited to make this decision: reluctant, as anyone would be, to look a gift horse in the mouth. The fact that he was "conventionally qualified only adds to his critique of programs that offer special privileges to people who do not need them.

As for the unqualified "provisional students" often admitted under minority recruitment programs. Rodriguez describes how the main thing provided was a dose of hypocrisy: "The conspiracy of kindness became a conspiracy of uncaring. . . . Not surprisingly, among those students with very poor academic preparation, few completed their courses of study. Many dropped out, most blaming themselves for their failure. . . . And the university officials who so diligently took note of those students in their self-serving totals of entering minority students finally took no notice of them when they left." Many who remained were given meaningless grades that moved them toward "meaningless graduation." Rodriguez reminds us that students like these often had "been treated with such generosity before."

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Rodriguez made his opinions known at the time, and it is part of the irony and nuance of this book that it includes among the benefits of affirmative action the attention he received for speaking against it. "I enjoyed being—not being—a minority student, the featured speaker . . . On weekends I flew cross country to say—through a microphone—that I was not a minority." He also received the scorn of his fellow Chicano students, who by the early 1970's had organized themselves into part of what he calls the "Ethnic Left." Their explanation for his views was simple: He was a "coconut—someone brown on the outside, white on the inside."

The label, though easy, was not easily dismissed. Rodriguez does not make explicit the connection, but "coconut" harks back to an earlier label applied by his relatives when, as a young boy, he had not only learned English but suppressed his knowledge of Spanish. They called him "*pocho*," which translates as "colorless" or "bland" —among Mexican-Americans a term to describe one who has forgotten his native culture. Earlier chapters recall both the accuracy of the term and the affection with which it was used—for his relatives were describing their own child, after all.

Needless to say, the Chicano students at Berkeley did not pour much affection into their use of the word "coconut." It is interesting to note that among college students the preservation of authentic Chicano culture required the coinage of a new term—one that could be understood by the *gringos*. Rodriguez points out that "Chicano" itself underwent a similar transformation. In Spanish it was "a private word, slangish, even affectionately vulgar, and, when spoken by a stranger, insulting, because it glibly assumed familiarity." The term has since passed into widespread use among Mexican-Americans, but its new connotations did not arise in the *barrio*. Those are the product of the campus.

TODAY militancy may have ebbed, but it is not uncommon to see a minority student arrive at a prestigious university and announce immediately that he is going to major in his own culture, which presumably he has just left behind. For this he will receive encouragement from the kind of academicians who shudder at the thought of imposing western civilization on a young mind which does not or (in their opinion) should not want any part of it. They will allow him to take the sort of courses where the minority student enlightens the teacher, and gets academic credit for exploring his ethnic identity (something other students must do in their spare time). Yet even though these practices are approved of by many on the faculty, they originate in the institutionalized form of late-1960's militancy: the Third World student organizations.

Rodriguez claims that he is "not the best person to evaluate the Third World Student Movement," accepting to some degree the "coconut" label. He admits the possibility that other Chicano students possessed closer ties to the *barrio*, and therefore more right to flaunt its culture on the campus. Yet his evaluation of the move-

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ment is cogent precisely because it is based on a fine and subtle understanding of what happens to lower-class culture when it becomes self-conscious enough to flaunt.

What he has to say is really quite simple: His literary background has helped him define the phenomenon as "middle-class pastoral." The upper-class pastoral "can admit envy for the intimate pleasures of rustic life as an arrogant way of reminding its listeners of their difference . . . ('Let's be shepherds . . . Ah, if only we could.')" The middle-class pastoral, on the other hand, is "a more difficult hymn. There is no grand compensation to the admission of envy for the poor. The middle class rather is tempted by the pastoral impulse to deny its difference from the lower class—even to attempt cheap imitations of lower-class life. ('But I still *am* a shepherd!')"

The students who wear serapes on the Berkeley campus, or "thicken their surnames with rich baroque accents," are misrepresenting their real position with regard to both their own culture and that of the *anglo* campus. Rodriguez's courage consists in stating the exact distance he has traveled from his origins. Not only that, but he exhibits great sensitivity to the fine distinctions between Mexican-Americans of his parents' modest accomplishments, and those at the bottom, *los pobres*. With respect, not snobbery, he recalls what it took his parents, and himself, to move up those rungs in the ladder. For him the tragedy of affirmative action may be less educational than cultural, in that it confuses its beneficiaries about priorities in their own culture—namely, which values did and did not make possible the advancement of those who came before.

It is ironic that anyone should label Rodriguez as one who has forgotten. In the sense of becoming intellectual, an "anthropologist in the family kitchen," he has forgotten what it was like to belong to his family's world. But his advantage over many on the Ethnic Left is that he realized very early that schooling was transforming him, and did not deceive himself or others. This may have to do with the quality of his mind, or the fact that he went through it alone. Whatever the cause, he is right in saying "one does not forget by trying to forget. One only remembers. I remembered too well that education was changing my family's life." As the title says, Rodriguez is a man of hungry memory, eloquent memory. The Ethnic Left would do well to claim such memory for their cause, but they will not. They cannot, because Rodriguez does not share their ideological predisposition to remember only the progressive aspects of culture, while muting or discarding the backward. Rodriguez remembers them all.

Most reviewers have ignored the chapter in which Rodriguez praises his Catholic childhood and education. The liberal press does not expect to hear a Third-Worlder suggest that for him the Catholic Church "excited more sexual wonderment than it repressed. . . . At Easter high mass I was dizzied by the mucous perfume of white flowers at the celebration of rebirth. At such moments, the

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Church touched alive some very private sexual excitement; it pronounced my sexuality important." The Ethnic Left has not exactly promoted the idea that, for lower-class Mexican-Americans, the Church is the only institution that has "encouraged them to dwell on the meaning of their lives. To think." Yet Rodriguez goes even further. After discussing the Vatican II liturgical reforms, which he dislikes, he states that disliking them is no excuse for skipping mass. For beyond his other bold assertions lies the ultimate one: that he believes. If it takes courage to preserve one's native culture in the face of assimilation, then serapes on campus can't hold a candle to the image of Rodriguez arriving an hour late for the secular observances of Sunday brunch.

Finally Rodriguez remembers his family. The act of writing this memoir is a violation of their code of privacy. He even includes a letter from his mother begging him not to "tell the *gringos*" about how separated he feels from the family. " 'Do you really think this, Richard?' " For people like his parents, family privacy is sacred. It is wrong to expose petty details, let alone great emotions. Yet Rodriguez will not be a hypocrite, living by two sets of lights. He has accepted the intellectual world. Instead of flaunting a false difference from it, he has committed the final act of assimilation: He has offered up that which is sacred. By exposing his family to us, he has trusted our judgment over theirs. For the intellectual world says it is all right to do these things, if they are done well. On the television in the Rodriguez home, a Hollywood movie star discusses his divorce. Mrs. Rodriguez, we are told, turns it off in disgust. " 'Cheap people.' " She is right. But not about her son, writing this book. This book is a work of art, no ordinary revelation. And the man who wrote it is not cheap people.

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# CURRENT READING

## Revising the American Economy

As the exact magnitude of economic statistics has become more central in day-to-day American politics, the imprecision of short-term government figures has become more apparent. When those figures received less attention this imprecision was not disturbing; more accurate, revised figures would always be available within months or at most within a few years. Official government figures are still continuously revised, but in a time when news ages rapidly, these revisions are usually less widely reported than the original, less exact, numbers. The result is that the economy may be performing far differently at any given time than the public—and public officials—may realize. As the *Economist* (June 5, 1982) reports, this is precisely what happened over the past five years, in which the American economy performed far better than anyone supposed:

> Not only can statistical changes alter interpretation of current economic realities, they can also upset received wisdom about the past. In 1980 the commerce department revised the national income and product accounts used to measure income and output. These revisions, which go on all the time, called into question how far American industry was underinvesting and in need of new tax incentives.
>
> New estimates showed that spending on plant and equipment from 1977 to 1979 was much understated. Underestimates of business fixed investment also came to light as a result of the 1980 changes; revisions added 8-10% to the previous estimates for 1977-79. At the same time estimates of real non-residential fixed investment were increased. This indicated a rise in the ratio of non-residential fixed investment to gross national product (from 9.9% to 10.4% for 1974-79).
>
> Changes in the way dividends from abroad were measured suggest higher net exports and a higher gnp for the years since the late 1960s. Revised estimates added about 2.5% to the real gnp for 1974 and about 3.5% for 1979. A third of this increase could be laid down to newly calculated foreign earnings.
>
> The revised figures show a more rapid gain in worker productivity for the 1970s than was first assumed. As a result, the trend rate of growth in potential gnp has increased by a quarter of a percentage

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point a year since 1973. Revisions in the deflators have reduced price estimates, indicating a rise in real output.

Personal savings rates have also been revised upwards. From 1967 to 1979 the savings rate for each year was increased under the new calculations by half a percentage point or more. In 1979, for example, the revision boosted the savings rate from 4.5% to 5.2% of disposable personal income.

Against this improved past, does the present look better or worse? The answer may be to wait for the revised statistics.

## The Benefits of Congregation

Although most immigrants in this century moved into neighborhoods with their fellow countrymen on arrival, recent government policy has assumed that immigrants will better adapt to their new home if they immediately disperse. Now the *New York Times* (March 10, 1982) reports that this notion is being challenged in a study of Hispanic immigrants undertaken by Professor Alejandro Portes of Johns Hopkins University:

> Professor Portes, a leading scholar in migration studies, said at a news conference that the concentration of immigrants in specific areas, like the Cubans in Miami, may be beneficial, contrary to the assumptions of Government and private resettlement workers.
>
> There have been many studies of immigrants, Professor Portes said, but no other study followed so large a group for as long a period, and in detail.
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> Beginning in 1973, Mexicans were interviewed as they entered the United States at border stations in Laredo and El Paso, Tex. Cuban refugees were interviewed as they arrived in Miami.
>
> Ninety-eight percent of the Cubans remained in Miami for six or more years. "This degree of concentration is unusual among new immigrant groups and contrasts markedly with the Mexican experience," Professor Portes said.
>
> The Mexicans scattered throughout the country. In 1979, there were large concentrations in Texas (53 percent of those followed in the study), Illinois (16 percent) and California (14 percent).
>
> Cubans who worked their way up in immigrant enterprises in the Miami area fared better than Mexicans who settled in nonethnic neighborhoods, Professor Portes said. "Contrary to the view of immigrant enterprise as exploitative of recent immigrants," he said, "the Cubans who stayed in Miami, in the enclave, seemed to do somewhat better economically" than the Mexicans who scattered around the country.
>
> "Immigrant enclaves tend to promote self-employment," he said. "Their absence tends to keep immigrants in wage labor. Self-employed immigrants and others working within an ethnic enclave seem to do better than those in wage labor on the outside."
>
> Thus, Professor Portes said, there is an advantage in "allowing immigrant minorities to resettle in areas of their preference, rather than requiring them to resettle elsewhere."

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## The Computer Age?

Most revolutions do not take place in the way people expect. Take computers, for instance. When the first breakthroughs in computer design occurred in the 1950's, prophets of the "computer age" predicted massive changes in almost every realm of modern life: the home, business, even politics. Most of the dramatic positive changes never happened, of course, but neither have the negative ones. Predictions that computer technology would soon make people both sedentary and solitary have proven wildly mistaken. For example, every Sunday the *New York Times Magazine* runs an advertisement for "Computer Camps International—THAT PROVEN PROGRAM," with one child's endorsement that "I swam, I hiked, I ran a computer." The two-week sessions are held in three states—Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Texas—and it is promised that "Campers at COMPUTER CAMPS INTERNATIONAL will have sports, crafts, games . . . and a brighter future."

Microchips and adult recreation also mix rather well, as a recent issue of *Forbes* (April 26, 1982) reports:

> The Club Méditerranée resorts, where sun meets skin and boy meets girl, have added an up-to-the-minute touch to their catalog of joy—computers. A few Club Meds have been offering "computer rooms," where vacationers can gratify the urge to play with keyboards; now the organization is talking to Warner Communications about buying Atari 400 and 800 home computers for other locations. No deal has been signed, but discussions are under way, Warner says. The Ataris would be used for game-playing (their most conspicuous and profitable role for Warner) and for any other computer-based activities Club Med revelers might choose.

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